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Great Patriotic War: Unknown Warrior

Egor Shchekotikhin
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Biggest
TNKOVÖEV
battle

Great Patriotic

Moscow

UDC 94
BBK 63.3(0)
Shch37

Design by artist P. Volkov

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About 1,500 tanks and self-propelled guns took part in this grandiose battle on both sides - much more than at Prokhorovka. This operation was the turning point of the 1943 summer campaign of the year. It was here that the fate of the Battle of Orel was decided, and ultimately the fate of the entire Great Patriotic War.

Despite the extremely unfavorable conditions for the offensive - rugged swampy terrain, rainy weather, prepared enemy defenses - at the cost of huge losses, the Soviet tankers managed to overcome two anti-tank lines, break the stubborn resistance of the Nazis and force the German command to hastily withdraw troops from the Orlovsky bridgehead.

However, this victory remained in the shadow of the famous Prokhorov battle and is now virtually forgotten. This study, based on unpublished materials from the Russian and German archives, restores historical justice, lethally, day by day, reconstructing the hall of the largest tank battle of the Great Patriotic War.

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BATTLE FOR THE EAGLE -
DECISIONAL BATTLE OF SUMMER 1943

The Second World War is the greatest conflict in history, the greatest tragedy staged by man on its stage. On the vast scale of war, the individual dramas that make up the whole can easily be lost. It is the historian's duty and destiny to isolate them and assign them their proper place in the historical hierarchy of events.

The history of Russia, including its military component, ordered that the front of the Great Patriotic War divided the Oryol region in half for two years, and its border passed along the banks of the Oka, Zushi and Sosna rivers. In terms of duration and military-political significance, the Battle of Oryol is not inferior to the largest battles of the Second World War, and in a certain part surpasses them. At different times, the troops of four Soviet fronts took part in the battles for the liberation of the region: the Southwestern (S.K. Timoshenko), the Western (G.K. Zhukov, V.D. Sokolovsky), the Bryansk (A.I. Eremenko, M. .M. Popov) and Central (K.K. Rokossovsky)'.

A thorough analysis of military-historical literature (both domestic and foreign), as well as a number of funds of the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (TsAMO RF, Podolsk, Moscow Region) and the Federal Military Archive of the Federal Republic of Germany, Freiburg (Vipdeagstu - Miyagagsu - VA-MA, \$6.

! Soviet military encyclopedia. In 8 volumes - M.: Military Publishing House, 1976-1980. T. 1. P. 609; T. 3. P. 396; T. 8. P. 427, 624.

2? TsAMO RF, fund - 202, op. 1213,1214,1391,1412-1416; f. 310, op. 4376.4381; f. 361, op. 6079; f. 404, op. 9783; f. 418; VA-MA VN 20-2/494 - 2-pa Appu; VN 21-2/509 - 2-pa RapkhegArpu; VN 20-9/339 9-pa Agtu and others.

of the Central Fronts, the 2nd Panzer and 9th armies of the enemy in the Oryol-Bryansk, Oryol-Kursk and Oryol directions', gives grounds to consider the Oryol offensive operation of 1943 (currently it is called the "Oryol strategic offensive operation under the code the name "Kutuzov") as an integral part of the Battle of Oryol).

Domestic and foreign historiography, intentionally or accidentally, is completely inadequate to that grandiose battle for Orel, which almost continuously, if we take into account the battles in the air, lasted exactly two years - from October 1941 to October 1943.

At best, historians consider it in the context of the battle on the Orel-Kursk Bulge (Operation Kutuzov - July 12 - August 18, 1943). Moreover, all researchers, both Soviet (Russian) and foreign, as a rule, fixate on the Prokhorovka tank battle, considering it the culminating and decisive battle of the Great Patriotic (consider World War II) War. And yet it is not so; it does not correspond to the truth at all.

' The term "direction" is used in military research literature when operations of an offensive nature are considered, which are planned in advance and "are deployed in an important, as a rule, strategic direction by a front (armies, groups or groupings) or several fronts connected by the unity of the operational concept and purpose of action." See: Shaposhnikov B.M. Battle for Moscow. View from the General Staff. - M.: Yauza, Eksmo, 2005. Pp. 325.

2 In the wars of the twentieth century (World War I, World War II, the Great Patriotic War, etc.), the term "battle" means "a series of simultaneous and successive offensive and defensive operations of large groupings of troops, carried out in the most important directions or theaters of military operations in order to achieve strategic results in a war or in a military campaign" (see: Soviet military encyclopedia. - M.: Voen izdagt, 1976-1980. Vol. 1. P. 479. Four offensive operations with the participation in each of them of several armies, as a rule, of two fronts).

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In the summer of 1943, everything was decided in a key battle (if you want - in a battle) for the possession of the Oryol bridgehead. For the Soviet troops, this was the Oryol strategic offensive operation, codenamed Kutuzov, the sixth operation in the two-year battle for Oryol.

Each of the parties, as archival documents confirm, not only at the final stage of the battle for Orel, but also for two years, solved the problem of capturing

zhaniya archival strategically Oryol foothold. All operations are presented in detail in my fundamental work "Battle of Oryol - two years: facts, statistics, analysis". For the first time in historiography, it gives a panorama of the battle, through the fiery millstones of which over three million soldiers and officers of the opposing sides, a huge number of technical means designed to destroy people, were frayed in two years.

It should also be taken into account that these tragic events affected all the inhabitants of the Oryol region, populated mainly by the Russian ethnic group.

The Oryol region was the largest region of the Russian Federation at that time. Its territory was 67,873 square kilometers. It included 66 districts and several large cities: the city of Orel - the administrative center, as well as the cities of Bryansk, Zadonsk, Yelets, Karachev, Klinty, Livny, Mtsensk, Sevs, Trubchevsk, etc. - 23 cities, 1264 village councils and 22 workers' settlements. According to the All-Union Census of the Russian Federation, as of October 1, 1939, 3,535,422 people lived in the region, of which 3,435,811 were Russians (or 97.2 percent)!

The fighting for the Orlovsky bridgehead is not inferior in scope and intensity to the key battles of the Great Patriotic War. This is confirmed by statistical data.

1 SAOO, f. 2583, op. 12, d. 120, l. 136, 136 (0b.); op. 1, d. 5, l. 1.

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OREL IS A STRATEGIC CENTER SOVIET-GERMAN FRONT

It is known that in accordance with the plan "Barbarossa" (German attack on the Soviet Union), the Oryol region fell under the blow of the left flank of the German troops of the Army Group "Center", the tip of which was directed through Minsk, Smolensk to Moscow.

When moving to the capital of the Soviet state, such a vast region as Orlovskaya, with its huge human resources, military-industrial and agricultural potential, could not remain out of sight of the military-political leadership of the German Research Institute.

There were other reasons as well. So, the highest point of the East European Plain - the core of Eastern Europe and the European part of Russia - is the Central Russian Upland. The Oryol region occupies its central

Part.

Two maximum heights - one near the village of Panko in the Maloarkhangelsky district (286 m above sea level), the other not far from the district center Soskovo (277 m above sea level) - are within the borders of the last.

The Smolensk-Tambov highway passes almost near these points, which, as it were, marks the border between the Dnieper and Volga-Oka watersheds. It is on the slopes of the Central Russian Upland that the rivers originate: the Desna and its tributaries, flowing to the southwest - to the Dnieper, and the Oka with numerous tributaries carrying their waters to the northeast, to the Volga.

Thus, the Oryol region turned out to be not only the geographical center, but also the "dominant height" of Eastern Europe.

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After the German "blitzkrieg", directed through the center of Russia, collapsed as a result of a two-month battle near Smolensk, the Hitlerite command, urgently revising the entire strategy of waging war in the East, began to look for a way out of the situation. By mid-September, when the Leningrad grouping of Soviet troops, together with the inhabitants of Leningrad, was blocked, and in the Kiev region, the largest grouping of troops of the Southwestern Front, the headquarters of the OKW (German: OK \ U /) and OKH (German: OKN) was surrounded and destroyed! planned an operation to capture the Soviet capital, which received the code name "Typhoon". In accordance with this plan, Moscow was surrounded on two sides: from the northwest - through Vyazma and Rzhev - and from the southeast - through Orel and Tula.

At the German headquarters, when choosing the routes for the movement of tank-mechanized columns around Moscow, first of all, the geography of the area that the tanks and vehicles were supposed to overcome was taken into account. At that moment, the problem of the passability of the enemy's motorized columns became aggravated due to the fact that the optimal period, favorable for the offensive, was missed: in October it began to rain, on October 6 the first snow fell. The Rzhev and Oryol directions in this case were, if not ideal, then close to it. In fact, the enemy had no other choice. Highways and railways passed through Vyazma and Rzhev from the west, and through Orel from the west and from the south.

The Rzhevsky and Orlovsky bridgeheads, after their rapid capture at the first stage of Operation Typhoon, turned out to be "springboards" for the German aggressor for the last "jump" to Moscow, and it is quite natural that they became the subject of confrontation in a cycle of fierce battles for their possession. Looking ahead, I will say: it is no coincidence that the Germans aptly called the Rzhevsky ledge "the cornerstone of the Eastern Front", and the Orlovsky ledge, which was already at the end

1 OKV - High Command of the Wehrmacht OKH - High Command of the Ground Forces (OKN - Obecottapdo des Neees).

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December 1941 marked its borders, "a dagger aimed at the heart of Russia." The Orlovsky bridgehead from October 1941 to October 1943, and the Rzhevsky bridgehead until March 1943, were of geostrategic importance for the warring parties. Their possession had a significant impact on the entire course of the war.

In addition, at one of the meetings of the top military-political leadership of the Third Reich, Hitler uttered a phrase about the policy towards the defeated Russia.

zu, which is recorded in a document stored in the Federal Military Archive of Freiburg: "Or] o] 151 4a\$ Hepgit des Nsheyapdez" "Eagle - the center of Hitler's country." It was meant that after the capture of Moscow, when it would be "razed to the ground", Orel should become the center of the occupation regime. Thus, Orel (and the region surrounding it) with the beginning of the operation "Typhoon" acquired for the Nazi leadership of Germany also the status of a center with geopoies.

tic value.

It is no coincidence that during the winter counter-offensive near Moscow, the Oryol direction was chosen by the Soviet command as one of the general ones for the offensive of the Red Army troops. It was on the Orlovsky bridgehead, where by the beginning of December 1941, two German armies (2nd tank and 2nd field) had concentrated, that the first and crushing blow was dealt (the Yelets-Livenskaya operation), as a result of which 34 th Army Corps.

With incredible efforts, the German command managed to stabilize the front by the end of December 1941, and here the captured cities of Shlisselburg (Petrokrepost), Demyansk, Rzhev, Orel, Kharkov, and Rostov played an important role in its strengthening. They became centers, bastions, with the help of which the German troops for a long time (some less, others longer) held the entire offensive front of the Soviet troops.

Of all these bastions, Rzhevsky and Orlovsky had the greatest significance. At that time, the bulk of the Soviet troops were concentrated in the western and southwestern

And

directions and occupied positions along the perimeters of the Rzhevsky and Orlovsky bridgeheads, which protruded far to the east. These bridgeheads, occupying an advantageous position in relation to Moscow, have now acquired strategic importance. For many months they became the main targets for the strikes of the Soviet troops, carried out with the aim of breaking through the enemy's defenses, with the subsequent liquidation of bridgeheads.

At the beginning of 1942, the Red Army attacked the troops of Army Group Center simultaneously in two places - in the Vyazma region and in the Orel region, in order to push the enemy as far away from the capital as possible. In the event of a successful development of hostilities in the Vyazemsky direction, the troops of the Western Front, advancing along the only artery supplying German troops, the Vyazma-Smolensk railway line, were to reach the Dnieper, liberating the city of Smolensk.

At the same time, front-line offensive

operations. The commander of the Southwestern Front, Timoshenko, whose troops were advancing in the Kursk direction, realized the futility of hostilities and on January 26 stopped the offensive of the troops of the 21st and 40th armies. Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief Zhukov, being commander of the Western direction (Kalinin and Western fronts), showing unprecedented persistence, tried to kill two birds with one stone: to eliminate enemy groups on the Rzhev-Vyazemsky and Orlovsky bridgeheads.

Zhukov's troops stormed the Rzhevsky bridgehead almost continuously for four months, and the troops of the Bryansk Front - Orlovsky. The enemy, realizing their strategic importance, stood to the death. With the colossal efforts of the Nazis, the attacks of the armies of Konev, Zhukov and Cherevichenko were repulsed. The German formations of the 4th Panzer and 9th Armies managed to hold out and hold the 500-kilometer front of the Rzhev Bulge, and the 2nd Panzer Army - the 400-kilometer front of the Oryol Bulge until offensive capabilities

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our fronts have not completely dried up. What it cost the Red Army and our people can be imagined by looking at the data on the losses of personnel of the troops of three fronts (Kalinin, Western and Bryansk) during the period of hostilities from January 1 to April 30, 1942. They amounted to 846,553 warriors, including 305,948 irretrievably (killed and missing) people.

The offensive of the German troops in the summer of 1942, undertaken from the southern sector of the Orlovsky bridgehead by the troops of the 2nd Weichs field army in the direction of Liski - Kastornoe - Voronezh, forced our command to temporarily abandon the planned summer offensive, the purpose of which was to liberate the Orlovsky bridgehead.

In the winter of 1943, as a result of the victorious development of the Stalingrad counter-offensive, the Oryol direction again became the general one for the Soviet command, along with Rzhevsky and Kharkov. In this regard, the Soviet military-political leadership began to intensively build up efforts in this sector of the front, systematically transferring the released troops of the Don (Central) Front from the Stalingrad region².

In the General Staff of the Red Army, by the beginning of February, work was completed on a cycle of operations related to a single grandiose strategic component - to move the entire Soviet-German front and to reach the pre-war borders by the summer of 1943.

For this purpose, the directives of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command were sent to the commanders of the respective fronts to defeat the Leningrad-Volkhov, Demyansk, Rzhev-Vyazma and Eagles of the Sko-Bryansk enemy groupings.

I will highlight the last two directives, which gave

1 TsAMO RF, f-213, op. 2066, d. 5, l. 1-190; d. 14, l. 9-372; d. 57, l. 1-2; F. 208, op. 2579, d. 22, l. 10, 49; f. 202, op. 7, d. 15, l. 117-176; d. 1, l. 52-190; f.405, op. 9815, d. 2, l. 56; Russia and the USSR in the Wars of the 20th Century: A Statistical Study. - M: OLMA-PRESS, 2001. Pp. 311.

2 Directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command No. 46056 dated February 5, 1943, it was planned to transform the Don Front into the Central Front, with the inclusion of the 21st, 65th, 70th, 2nd Tank, 16th Air Armies and the 2nd Cavalry Corps.

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installation for the troops of the Kalinin, Western and Bryansk fronts - not only to eliminate simultaneously two bridgeheads: Rzhev-Vyazemsky and Orlovsky, but also to destroy the troops of Army Group Center based on them.

The plan of the Soviet command provided for a deep coverage of the main forces of Army Group Center (9th and 4th field armies, 3rd and 2nd tank armies), their encirclement and defeat in the Orel and Rzhev areas, followed by access to the Vitebsk line - Smolensk - Gomel. The main feature of the planned operation was that, in order to achieve its ultimate goal, the fronts had to carry out a number of successive tasks: first to defeat the enemy in the area of Orel and Bryansk, and then at Rzhev.

To carry out this task, it was planned to involve the troops of four fronts - Kalinin, Western, Bryansk and Central, as well as part of the forces of the Voronezh Front. The operation was planned to be carried out in three stages.

Despite the enormous efforts of the Red Army, only the Rzhevsky bridgehead was liquidated, from which the German troops were transferred to reinforce the Oryol grouping, and from that moment it becomes dominant due to its location in the center of the entire Eastern Front.

Considering many aspects of the influence of the results of the battle on the central sector of the Soviet-German front, it should be borne in mind that the military operations of the troops of the Bryansk and Central Fronts to eliminate the Oryol bridgehead were completely unexpectedly realized with a positive result in another place - the German troops abandoned Rzhevsko- Vyazemsky bridgehead. Let me remind you that before that, during the 14 months of uninterrupted and unsuccessful military operations to eliminate the Rzhev salient, the troops of the Kalinin and Western fronts irrevocably lost (killed and missing) 746,485 people.

1 These are losses only in three operations: Rzhev-Vyazemskaya (January 8-20, 1942), Rzhev-Sychevskaya (July 30-August 23, 1942) and Rzhev-Vyazemskaya (March 2-31, 1943). See: Classified Removed: Loss of Armed Forces

of the Soviet Forces in Wars, Combat Actions and Military Conflicts: Statistical Studies / Ed. G.F. Krivosheev. - M: Voeniz dat, 1993. Pp. 176, 225-226.

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At the end of March, the situation stabilized on the entire Soviet-German front, and a lull set in. In the region of Orel, Kursk and Kharkov, the following outline of the front line was formed: in the center, west of Kursk, the Kursk salient was clearly marked, the inner front of which was held by the troops of the left wing of the Central and right wing of the Voronezh fronts. To the east of Orel, the Oryol Bulge was also clearly visible, the inner front of which was defended by the troops of the 2nd Panzer and 9th armies of the enemy. Along the outer perimeter of the arc, the Soviet troops of the left wing of the Western, Bryansk and right wing of the Central Fronts held the defense. In the area of the city of Maloarkhangel'sk, the front of the Oryol Bulge docked with the front of the Kursk Bulge.

To the east of Kharkov, in mid-March, the Kharkov salient was outlined, the inner front of which was defended by the German troops of Army Group South. Along the outer perimeter of the arc, the Soviet troops of the left wing of the Voronezh and Southwestern fronts held the defense. In the area of the city of Belgorod, the front of the Kharkov Bulge docked with the front of the Kursk Bulge.

Thus, by April 1943, three bridgeheads were clearly marked on the central sector of the Soviet-German front, one of which, Kursk (in the center), was occupied by Soviet troops, and two: to the north of Kursk - Orlovsky, to the south of Kursk - Kharkov - was occupied by non-German troops.

In my opinion, the incompleteness of the implementation of the strategic setting of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. - the defeat of the German troops at the Orlovsky bridgehead and its liquidation in February - March 1943 - greatly complicated the position of the troops of the Bryansk, and then the Central Fronts. The Orlovsky bridgehead, due to the compression of the borders and the reinforcement of its troops by the 9th Army, where tank and motorized units predominated, became impregnable in all respects. The Orlovsky ledge, which appeared at the beginning of 1942, immediately became a bastion. At the end of March 1943, it acquired its clear outlines and was more than doubled by German troops. Without its elimination, it was impossible for any

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the movement of our troops to the west along the entire Soviet-German front. And, as it turned out, the liquidation of the Oryol bridgehead of the Germans in July-August 1943 required incredible efforts and enormous sacrifices.

The German High Command set itself the goal of cutting off the Kursk salient, encircling and destroying the Soviet troops in it.

The headquarters of the Supreme High Command, in turn, sought to hold the Kursk salient, and then encircle and destroy the German grouping located inside the Oryol salient, and free Orel. After the successful completion of this operation, the Red Army formations were given the task of encircling and destroying the German troops inside the Kharkov ledge and liberating the city of Kharkov. Both sides, after fulfilling their goals, ultimately had to seize the strategic initiative at the front.

The German command, in the event of successful operations of its troops and in accordance with the plan of the summer campaign of 1943, set its further task to return to the line of the upper reaches of the Don and Volga.

The Soviet command, after the successful conduct of operations to eliminate the Orlovsky, and then the Kharkov bridgeheads, planned the withdrawal of troops to the line of the Dnieper River.

According to Manstein: "On the whole, the situation left no doubt that the enemy would sooner or later try to achieve decisive success in the sector of Army Group South, and possibly also on the southern flank of Army Group Center, by means of an offensive with coverage of the Oryol arc "".

In principle, he guessed the plans of the General Staff of the Red Army and the plans of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. Only in the order Manstein miscalculated. As you know, in the summer of 1943, the Soviet command inflicted the first of ten blows in the center of the council of the Sco-German front in order to "take pincers from the north and south of the protrusion protruding near Orel far to the east, beyond

1 Manstein E. Lost victories - M.: LLC Firm Publishing House AST; St. Petersburg: Tepa Ratazyosa, 1999. Pp. 513.

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taken by the "Center" group, in order to break the front of the entire group in this way!

As planned in advance by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, the first blow of the Soviet troops was delivered on the Oryol Bulge simultaneously in three places: in the Khotynets, Bolkhovsky, Orlovsky directions (July 12), and then in the Kromsky direction (July 15).

Large strike groups formed from the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command east and north of Orel hit the flank and rear of the enemy strike group. The 9th Army, being under the threat of encirclement, was forced to stop the attack on Kursk, withdraw to their original positions and

send tank and motorized divisions to repulse the blows of our troops at Bolkhov and Novosil.

The goal pursued by the Soviet command with its offensive was to break through the defenses of the 2nd Panzer Army on its left flank northeast of Bryansk, go to the Orel-Bryansk railway and surround and then destroy the German divisions located in the Orel area. The signal for the start of the offensive was the critical situation in which the troops of the Voronezh Front found themselves in defensive battles against the strike force of Manstein to the north of Belgorod, near Prokhorovka.

And although the task that was assigned to the commanders of the three fronts - Generals Sokolovsky, Popov and Rokossovsky, was not fully completed, nevertheless, the offensive actions of the troops of the Western and Bryansk fronts forced the German command to take decisive measures in order to preserve the integrity of the front along 400-kilometer perimeter of the Oryol Bulge. At this critical moment, the command of the 9th and 2nd Panzer Armies, located on the Orlovsky bridgehead, was entrusted to Model, who had gained a reputation as a man who was able to "rake up reserves from nothing." Colonel General Walter Model, realizing the danger

1 Manstein E. Lost victories - M.: LLC Firm Publishing House AST; St. Petersburg: Teta Rappazbs, 1999. Pp. 513.

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penetration of the troops of the 11th Guards Army of Baghramyan and the 3rd Army of Gorbatov into the deep rear, stopped the offensive of their troops on Kursk, withdrew several tank and motorized divisions from the grouping of the 9th Army, advancing in a southerly direction, in order to direct them to the north and east of Orel, where a deep crisis was brewing.

At the same time, when the troops of the Bryansk and the left wing of the Western Fronts went on the offensive in the Oryol direction and it became clear that the plan for Operation Citadel had failed, Hitler invited Field Marshal von Kluge (commander of the Center group) and Man to his Headquarters. Shtein (commander of the "South" group). On July 13, Hitler posed the question point-blank: how to proceed further in the face of the unfavorable situation for the Wehrmacht and the entire Third Reich. By this time, the German defense had not withstood the blows of the Red Army. At once in three places of the Oryol Bulge, the Germans began to "fall through" into the Oryol bridgehead, nullifying some territorial successes on the northern and especially on the southern faces of the Kursk ledge, when the troops of the 4th Panzer Army of Hoth found themselves near Prokhorovka.

At the end of this meeting, Hitler took almost

The most difficult decision in his practice of managing a war is the decision to abruptly end Operation Citadel. From the very beginning, already when the task was formulated, it was tactically impossible and therefore failed.

"On the Soviet side <...>," writes the German historian Ernst Klink, "the success of the Russian defense is considered in direct connection with the counteroffensive, which ultimately led to the victorious advance of the Red Army and the liberation in the summer of 1943 of strategically important territories: first Orel and Belgorod-Kharkov "balconies", and then the left bank of the Dnieper.

By transferring a significant part of tank and motorized formations and mobile artillery units, with the participation of attack aircraft, the Model managed to quickly

1 Klink E.F. The law of action. Operation Citadel. 1943. Translation from German. - Schlutgart, 1966. Pp. 273.

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calize one by one the places of wedging. The most difficult for him was the Khotynets and then the Bolkhovskoe direction, where in the second decade of July there were three tank corps, and in the third decade already 5 tank and one mechanized corps. In these exhausting battles, when the Soviet command continuously increased its efforts, the united grouping of the Model, seriously weakened, could no longer hold the Orlovsky bridgehead. Thus, the preconditions for his complete release were created.

When the final battle for Orel, the strategic offensive operation Kutuzov, reached its climax on July 28, 1943, the intensity of the fighting in the Oryol direction was unparalleled in the history of the past two years of the war - in terms of the number of troops and military equipment on both sides. On a relatively small territory, 16 armies fought on the Soviet side: 10 combined arms (11th Guards, 11th, 50th, 61st, 3rd, 63rd, 48th, 13th, 70th and 65th), Ztankovye (2, Zi 4th) and 3 air (1, 15 and 16th). They included 95 rifle divisions, 13 tank and 2 mechanized corps, 7 separate tank brigades (not included in the corps), 30 separate tank and 24 self-propelled tank regiments, 35 aviation divisions (excluding long-range aviation) and other parts - with a total number of 1510 464 people. This grouping had more than 28,000 guns and mortars, 4,062 tanks and self-propelled guns, and more than 3,000 combat aircraft.

For example, the number of two fronts, Voronezh and Steppe, at the beginning of the Belgorod-Kharkov strategic offensive operation, code-named "Rumyantsev" (August 3-23, 1943) was 1,144,000 soldiers and officers, consisting of 50 rifle divisions, 11 tank and mechanized corps, 5 tank brigades and others

parts.

The Oryol grouping of Soviet troops prevailed over the Red Army groupings near Moscow in December 1941 (1,021,700 people) and Stalingrad in November 1942 (1,143,500 people) in terms of numbers, and even more so in terms of

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aircraft, tanks, guns and mortars, including Guards jet mortars.

Before the decisive battle for the Orlovsky bridgehead, the German command concentrated 37 divisions on it, including 6 tank and 2 motorized divisions, with a total number of 600,000 people, who were supported in battles by 1000 tank self-propelled guns, 6000 guns and mortars, as well as 1100 aircraft. At the height of the battle from the German side, 54 divisions were already fighting in the Oryol direction, among which there were 8 tank and 5 motorized divisions. On July 28, 1943, this grouping, after the transfer of tank, motorized and infantry divisions from other sectors of the front to the Orel direction, numbered about 800,000 people.

Thus, on the relatively small area of the Orlovsky bridgehead (about 25,000 km²), the groups of the opposing sides totaled about 2.3 million people.

The number of troops in the Oryol offensive operation "Kutuzov" also had no analogues. If at the beginning of the operation there were an average of 3,325 Soviet soldiers per 1 km of the front, then by the end of the battle this figure doubled and amounted to about 7,000 people. For comparison: in the Moscow offensive operation, there were about 1000 Soviet soldiers per 1 km of the front, in the Stalingrad operation - 1350 people, in the Belgorod-Kharkov operation - 2860 people.

The unprecedented concentration of troops of the opposing sides (at the final stage of the battle on Oryol land, about 150 infantry and tank formations participated on both sides), as well as the strategic importance of the Oryol bridgehead, determined the uncompromising nature of

1! Calculated by the author based on the materials of the Federal Military Archive of Germany - VA-MA: VU used 564; Used VU 574. \$. 1-100; P2. A.O.K. 2.: VN 21-2/y 444, 494a, 7966; A.O.K. 9.: VN 20-9/135, VN 20-9/339. \$. 1-72. Müller-Gil Lebrand B. Land Army of Germany 1933-1945. - M.: Izographus, Eksmo Publishing House, 2002. Pp. 658.

Classified as classified: Losses of the Armed Forces of the USSR in wars, hostilities and military conflicts: Statistical studies / Ed. G.F. Krivosheev. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1993. Pp. 174, 181, 188-189.

ter fighting. Only in the course of the Oryol offensive operation "Kutuzov", which lasted 37 days, the average daily losses of the Soviet troops amounted to 11,313 people (1.5 of the composition of a rifle division). At all stages of the hostilities in the Oryol direction, the Soviet troops lost about 1,029,373 people, of which more than 455,288 were killed and missing, and about 574,085 were wounded.

In July 1943, the total losses of German troops on the Soviet-German front amounted to 76,100 people killed and missing. At the same time, the irretrievable losses of the Wehrmacht near Orel in July 1943 were 27,245 people, i.e. 36% of all losses on the Eastern Front.

1 Calculated by the author according to the documents of the TsAMO RF (Bryansk Front), as well as: The classification was removed: Losses of the Armed Forces of the USSR in wars, hostilities and military conflicts: Statistical studies / Ed. G.F. Krivosheev. — M.: Voenizdat. 1993. Pp. 174, 181, 188-189.

For example, only the 110th Rifle Division in the battles near Orel in the period from July 12 to August 17, 1943 lost 7194 people, of which: 1901 were killed and missing, 5293 were wounded. On July 12, 1943, the division consisted of 8020 people. Thus, the losses of this unit during the offensive amounted to 90%. See: TsAMO RF, f. 1304. op. 2, d. 8, l. 29-219; l. 28, l. 16-109; 36, l. 1-110.

2 Müller-Hillebrand B. Land Army of Germany 1933-1945. - M.: Izographus, Eksmo Publishing House, 2002. Pp. 717.

3 VA-MA, A.O.K. 9. Used 564. \$. 172.

OPERATION "KUTUZOV":

PURPOSE, PLAN AND ACTIONS OF THE PARTIES

Since the Borilovsky armored battle turned out to be decisive and ultimately determined the outcome of the entire Oryol battle in our favor, it is necessary to consider the Oryol strategic offensive operation "Kutuzov" in this context, its planning, the balance of forces and the position of the opposing sides by July 26, 1943, those. by the time the battle of steel machines began on the Nugr River. |

The goal of the Oryol offensive operation "Kutuzov" was to create unrealistic conditions for mastering the strategic initiative (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - E. Shch.) on the entire Soviet-German front. As a result of the operation "Kutuzov" (the first in a series of offensive operations of the Soviet troops carried out in the summer and autumn of 1943 in the central part and on the southern wing of the Soviet-German front), a radical turning point occurred in the course of the Great Patriotic War. And, according to the chief

General Staff A.M. Vasilevsky: "The initiative for action on the Soviet-German front—the main and decisive front of the entire Second World War—was firmly entrenched in the hands of the Red Army."

Preparations for the Oryol offensive operation began well in advance - even before the German troops went on the offensive on the northern and southern faces of the Kursk Bulge on July 5, 1943 (Operation Citadel). Its main co

1 Vasilevsky A.M. The work of a lifetime. - M.: Politizdat, 1988. Book. 2. Page thirty.

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The goal was the creation and deployment of strategic reserves, the introduction of which was necessary for the successful completion of offensive operations, first on the Orel salient, and then on the Belgorod-Kharkov salient. This made it possible to launch Operation Kutuzov practically without an operational pause after parrying an enemy strike in the defensive operation of the Central Front in the Oryol-Kursk direction.

In the Oryol operation, the troops of three fronts (Western, Bryansk and Central) were tasked by the Headquarters of the Supreme Command: to strike at the enemy's Oryol grouping, defeat it, capture the city of Orel and reach the lines favorable for the deployment of a strategic offensive in the western direction: when interacting with the neighbor on the right - the Western Front - in the direction of Bryansk, Bobruisk, and when interacting with the neighbor on the left - the Voronezh Front - in the direction of Lgov, Chernigov.

At the end of May 1943, the Soviet command was faced with the question of where to strike the first blow: south of Kursk, in the region of Kharkov and Belgorod (this was advocated by the commander of the Voronezh Front, Colonel General N.F. Vatutin and the head of the Operations Department of the General Staff S. M. Shtemenko), or north of Kursk, in the Orel region.

The idea of destroying the southern flank of the enemy was tempting. However, this plan was rejected. Vasilevsky and Stalin agreed that the first blow should be delivered by the forces of three fronts on the Orel sector of the Soviet-German front in order to eliminate the Orlovsky bridgehead of the Germans.

The arguments in favor of this decision were as follows.

1. The offensive operation in the south did not affect the central sector of the Soviet-German front and the main (western) strategic direction, did not neutralize the main enemy grouping - Army Group Center, which in this case would threaten the flanks of the Western and Bryansk fronts.

2. Deployment of the strongest strike tank grouping as part of the South Army Group, as well as the 4th Tank Army and the Kempf Group (selected tank and motorized

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units, including SS formations) on the Belgorod-Kharkov bridgehead called into question the success of our troops in this direction.

From the counterattack, which was inflicted in February - March 1943 by Manstein, the troops of the Voronezh Front could not recover for a long time. Formations of the 3rd Tank Army Lieutenant General P.S. Rybalko, who participated in the battle near Kharkov and suffered very significant losses, especially in tanks, could not fully recover even by the beginning of the Oryol offensive operation, i.e. by July 12, 1943.

As shown by the Kharkov defensive operation (March 4-25, 1943), in which the Southwestern and Voronezh fronts took part, the German troops in the southern direction were by no means "finally defeated" in the Stalingrad and Voronezh-Kharkov offensive operations, as they say in their memoirs, our generals, but represented an impressive force, concentrated in the water and in one hand. Our tank forces, on the other hand, suffered huge losses in all these three operations: they amounted to 4,260 tanks. The irretrievable losses of the 3rd Panzer Army in the twenty days of the Kharkov defensive operation alone amounted to 322 tanks.

It is the strength and power of the southern grouping of German troops, which was led by one of the most experienced military commanders of the German army, Manstein, as it seems to me, was the main argument in choosing the place for the first strike by our troops in the summer of 1943.

Alexander Mikhailovich Vasilevsky, who, as a representative of the Headquarters, was in late February - early March on the Voronezh Front, knew this well, as well as Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov, "who was entrusted with me [A.M. Vasilevsky] and the commanders of the fronts to develop and submit to the Headquarters considerations on a plan for further actions in this direction»>?.

! ' Russia in the Wars of the 20th Century: A Statistical Study. - M .: OL MA-PRESS, 2001. Pp. 485.

2 Vasilevsky A.M. The work of a lifetime. - M .: Politizdat, 1988. Book. 2. Page 9.

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As is known, by the evening of July 10 (that is, on the sixth day of the assault on the Kursk salient), the enemy strike group advancing from the area south of Orel was only able to slightly push the troops of the Central Front - by 9-12 kilometers. At the same time, as a result of the defensive actions of our troops, accompanied by energetic counterattacks against the enemy, the Nazis suffered significant losses in people and equipment. By the beginning of the seventh day, seeing that the plan for Operation Citadel was not being carried out, Colonel-General Walter Model, very cautious and very prudent in making decisions, ordered the suspension of operations to break through the defenses of the Soviet troops.

The summer "blitzkrieg" of 1943, when German tank and motorized columns rushed to Kursk from the north, was thwarted by the incredible efforts of the soldiers of the 13th and 70th armies of the Central Front. On July 12, 1943, when the battle of Prokhorovka was just beginning, the outcome of the entire battle of Kursk as a whole was already a foregone conclusion. On this day, the commander of the 9th Army, Model, makes a difficult decision: he returns his troops to their starting line - the left bank of the Oka River, to its sources.

After unsuccessful attempts to break through to Kursk from the south along the shortest path, through Oboyan, on July 11, the German command shifted the direction of its main attack. Now the enemy began to strive to capture Prokhorovka—an important road junction—and from there to launch a further offensive against Kursk. But the tank battles that rumbled in three places quite far from each other - near Verkhno penya, near Prokhorovka and Sheino - no longer mattered much to the Germans, because the general plan of Operation Tsita del was to encircle and destroy the Soviet troops, located in the Kursk region - failed. On the southern face of the Kursk Bulge, Manstein still continued to fight, but rather because of his own ambitions. A little later, on July 17, with the permission of Hitler, he would also decide to stop and then withdraw his troops to their original positions.

As you know, defensive operations are needed in order to slow down the enemy offensive and win

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the time needed to organize a counteroffensive. Based on this provision, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, even when organizing and planning the defense of the Kursk Salient in March 1943, provided for the transition to a general offensive of the troops of the left wing of the Western, Bryansk and Central Fronts against the enemy grouping operating on the Oryol bridgehead. That moment came at the end of the first decade of July.

What was the impetus for the start of the Oryol strategic operation, codenamed "Kutuzov", who and when gave the order to put it into action? Why exactly July 12, and not July 5 or 15? So far no documents have been found

cops who argue this decision.

The troops of the Western and Bryansk fronts were ready to start the operation at any moment. However, it should be noted that the strategic reserve of the Supreme Command Headquarters (3rd and 4th tank armies, 11th army, 25th tank and 2nd guards cavalry corps), which was then urgently needed for the successful completion of the operation "Kutuzov", by July 25, i.e. by the time it was entered, it was not fully prepared for hostilities at the Oryol bridgehead.

Apparently, July 12 was the date that was dictated by the situation that had developed on the Soviet-German front on both sides of Kursk as a result of the rapid and dynamic development of events.

By this time, the German troops were not yet exhausted and bled; on the contrary, Soviet troops began to suffer heavy losses in tanks, self-propelled guns and aircraft. A catastrophic situation has developed on the southern face of the Kursk salient.

The central front held out—that was already clear. And Voro Nezhsky needed help to get out of a very difficult situation. How? The beginning of the operation "Kutuzov". And it began on July 12, immediately violating all the plans of Hitler. Already on July 13, he invites the commander of Army Group South, Manstein, and the commander of Army Group Center, von Kluge, to a meeting in Rastenburg. A controversy unfolded: to continue the operation "Citadel" or stop

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tit? Manstein spoke in favor of its continuation, Kluge in favor of its immediate termination. The loss of 20,000 men in killed and wounded only on the first day of the offensive in the zone of troops of the Central Front and the withdrawal of three divisions (two tank and one motorized) from the southern sector of the Orlovsky bridgehead to the northeastern one - in order to block the deep penetrations of the Soviet troops, they did, with its point of view, the inevitable termination of the operation. Hitler compromised. He allowed Manstein to continue the offensive according to a slightly adjusted plan. But already on July 17, Manstein was ordered to suspend the offensive and transfer divisions to the Orlovsky bridgehead, where "in the north of Orel," in the words of the German generals, who, after the end of the war, wrote the collective work "World War. 1939-1945," meanwhile a gigantic battle was unfolding.

An employee of the operational department of the headquarters of the Army Group Center, later a professor, Herman Hakenholz noted: "The quick stop of the 9th Army offensive against the enemy's defense in depth did not cause <...> much surprise. But the strength and striking power of the Russian counterattacks on July 12 in the northern and northeastern sectors of the Orel salient were an unpleasant surprise.

stu. The rapidly developing crisis in the Karachev direction, the threat of losing communications with Orel were settled with great difficulty by involving all army reserves. That the Russians were able to attack in the summer with such success was unimaginable. The impression that with the failure of the Citadel and the Russian counter-offensive on July 12, 1943, there was a real turning point in the German-Russian war, the final operational turn in favor of the enemy, was for all of us, participants in the events in the operations department of the headquarters of Army Group Center ", especially clear at the time">?.

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World War. 1939-1945. - M.: LLC "Publishing House AST"; St. Petersburg: Publishing house "Polygon", 2000. Pp. 290.

? Cit. Quoted from: The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945: Military Historical Essays. In 4 volumes - M: Library-Mosgorarkhiv, 1995. Vol. 3. Pp. 273.

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The decisive offensive of the Nazi troops ended in defeat. And it was first of all moral, and then military. Starting from July 17, 1943, the Germans will never again advance on the Eastern Front. They will only snarl with retaliatory counterattacks.

In fact, the fate of the entire summer campaign, including the most important battle for the Germans in the Second World War under the Operation Citadel plan, was decided in the Battle of Oryol, which mostly took place in the territory that bears the historical name of Oryol Polesie. It was here that the motorized (tank-grenadier) division "Grossdeutschland" and several more divisions from various sectors of the Soviet-German front were transferred in order to prevent the troops of the Western Front - from the north and the Central Front - from the south to surround the German troops, concentrated in huge numbers on the Orlovsky bridgehead.

So, by July 12, in connection with the failure of the German offensive on the northern face of the Kursk Bulge in the offensive zone of the troops of the Central Front and in connection with the fact that the troops of the Voronezh Front found themselves in a difficult situation on the southern face, there was an urgent need to start the pre-planned Orel offensive operation codenamed "Kutuzov".

The fact that it was planned in advance is confirmed by A.M. Vasilevsky:

"The Soviet command began to develop a plan for future actions and to ensure their comprehensive support immediately after the end of the winter campaign at the end of March 1943. Already at the beginning of April, the Headquarters instructed the fronts to use the period of spring thaw for better

organization of the defense of the occupied lines, especially anti-tank defense, for the development of defensive installations and the creation of reserves in the main directions, as well as for the combat training of troops, which is based on the development of issues of organizing offensive combat. In April, signed by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, a Directive was issued on the creation by April 30 of a powerful Re

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the reserve front, later renamed the Stepnoy Okrug, and then the Stepnoy Front, which already on April 23 received the task of "preparing the troops mainly for the offensive."

However, soon significant changes were made to the plan of the summer offensive, which planned the main blow in the southwestern direction.

How was this, perhaps, one of the largest and most difficult in all respects operations carried out by the troops of the Red Army during the years of the Great Patriotic War, planned?

The main concept of the plan was as follows: "Using the operationally advantageous position of our troops, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command planned with powerful concentric strikes of three fronts (Western, Bryansk and Central), in the general direction of Oryol, to surround the enemy's Oryol grouping, cut it into pieces and destroy it" ?.

According to the plan of the operation, the Western Front (commander - Colonel General Vasily Danilovich Sokolovsky) with the forces of the 11th Guards Army (commander - Lieutenant General Ivan Khristoforovich Bagramyan) struck at the southstem, so that in cooperation with the troops of the Bryansk Front (commander - Colonel-General Marki an Mikhailovich Popov) to surround and destroy the enemy's Bolkhov grouping. After that, advancing part of the forces in a southerly direction on Khotynents, with the main forces to cover the enemy's Oryol grouping from the west and, together with the troops of the Bryansk Front, defeat it. To ensure the offensive of the 11th Guards Army from the west, an auxiliary blow was to be delivered to the troops of the 50th Army (commander - Lieutenant General Ivan Vasilyevich Boldin).

The Bryansk Front dealt the main blow on its left wing with the adjacent flanks of the 3rd and 63rd armies (commanded by Lieutenant General Alexander Vasilyevich Gorbатов and

1 Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky is a strategist, commander, man. - M .: Council of Veterans of Book Publishing, 2000. Pp. 243.

? Battle of Kursk. In 2 books. - M .: Military Publishing House, 1947. Book. 2. Page 12.

Lieutenant General Vladimir Yakovlevich Kolpakchi). They were to cut the Orel-Kursk railroad and ngose road, encircle and destroy the enemy who was defending east of Orel, liberate the city, and then advance to the west. On the right wing of the front of the 61st Army (commander - Lieutenant General Pavel Alekseevich Belov), in cooperation with the 11th Guards Army, it was necessary to surround the Bolkhov group and advance on Orel from the north, and to isolate and isolate part of the forces together with the 3rd Army defeat the Mtsensk grouping of the enemy.

The Central Front (commander General of the Army Konstantin Konstantin Rokossovsky) was supposed to have armies of the right wing: the 48th (commander Lieutenant General Prokofy Logvinovich Romanenko), the 70th (Lieutenant General Ivan Vasilievich Galanin) and the 13th (Leutnant General tenant Nikolai Pavlovich Nukhov) to eliminate the enemy's penetration in his defense zone. Then, striking in the general direction to Kromy and further to the north-west - Dmitrovsk, "envelop the Oryol grouping of Germans from the south and south-west and assist the troops of the Bryansk and Western fronts in its destruction">?.

On April 26, 1943, Sokolovsky, Belov, Reuters, Bagramyan, and a member of the Military Council of the Western Front, Lieutenant General Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bulganin, were summoned to the Headquarters for a meeting. The planning meeting for the Oryol operation (code-named "Kutuzov") was attended by the Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army Alexander Mikhailovich Vasilevsky, his deputy, Colonel General Alexei Innokentyevich Antonov, members of the Headquarters Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, Georgy Maksimilianovich Malenkov, Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov. The meeting in the Kremlin started at 22:35 and ended at 00:10, i.e. lasted 1 hour 35 minutes. The meeting was led by Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. About the plan of the Oryol operation

' Battle of Kursk. In 2 books. - M .: Military Publishing House, 1947. Book. 2. Page 15-18. 2 Ibid.

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walkie-talkie and the proposals of the front commanders, as Bagramyan writes in his memoirs, Antonov informed.

A day later, on April 28, K.K. Rokossovsky, and now the plan of the Oryol offensive operation and the participation of the troops of the Central Front in it was discussed with him for two and a half hours?

A month before the start of Operation Kutuzov, Vasilevsky insisted on replacing the commander of the Bryansk Front. He recommended to Stalin a very successful candidate in the person of Markian Mikhailovich Popov. This youngest of all the commanders of the fronts, Colonel General, had extensive experience in leading troops in major offensive operations.

Stalin agreed with Vasilevsky, but with one condition. In order to limit Popov, who was too bold and independent in making decisions, Lev Zakharovich Mekhlis, known in military circles, was recommended to him as a member of the Military Council of the Bryansk Front - the "eyes and ears" of Joseph Vissarionovich.

Thus, preparations for the Oryol offensive operation "Kutuzov" took place, in essence, in parallel with the preparation of the defensive operation of the troops of the Central Front on the northern face of the Kursk salient. This was due to the offensive nature of the strategic plan for the summer and autumn of the third year of the war. The initial plan for the offensive operation "Kutuzov" was developed by the General Staff, at the end of May, carefully worked out with the commanders of the fronts at Headquarters and approved by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Until now, this plan has not appeared in full in the open press.

In the book "Battle of Kursk" edited by I.V. Parotka, released in 1970, confirms the short duration of this operation - 4-5 days?

1 orkov Yu. GKO decides (1941-1945). — M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2002. P. 370.

2 Ibid.

3 Battle of Kursk. Edited by I.V. Parotkin. — M.: Nauka. 1970. Pp. 493.

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In the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense in the city of Podolsk, there is only a plan map of the 63rd Army of the Bryansk Front for the operation "Kutuzov".

According to this plan, the troops of the Bryansk Front were to liberate Orel from the German invaders already on the fourth day of the offensive.

Unfortunately, the transcripts of the meetings at the Supreme Command Headquarters have not yet been published, and we cannot find out the opinion of Rokossovsky, Commander of the Central Front, and Vasilevsky, Chief of the General Staff. In addition, the Kutuzov operation plan itself has not yet been discovered,

many directives of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command for this plan have been promulgated. But it is stored somewhere. On July 12, 1943, the representative of the Headquarters of the Supreme Command, Zhukov, in the first paragraph of his report to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, confirmed the existence of such a plan: "1. After one hour and forty-five minutes of artillery preparation, the troops of Vasilenko (Sokolovsky. - Y. Shch.) in Markov (Popova. - E. D.) went on the offensive according to the plan "Kutuzov" ?.

Probably, then Rokossovsky did not agree with the proposed plan for the operation "Kutuzov". Decades later, he made his point:

"The idea was to break up the Oryol grouping into parts, but also dispersed our troops. It seems to me that it would be simpler and more accurate to deliver two main strong blows to Bryansk (one from the north, the second from the south). At the same time, it was necessary to provide an opportunity for the troops of the Western and Central Fronts to carry out an appropriate regrouping. But the Headquarters allowed unnecessary haste, which was not caused by the situation that had developed in this sector. That is why the troops on the decisive axes (Western and Central Fronts) were unable to prepare in such a short time for the successful fulfillment of the assigned tasks, and the operation took on a protracted character. The enemy was pushed out of the Oryol ledge, and not his defeat. Became up

1 TsAMO RF, f. 202 he. 5, file 1541. ? There, f. 48, op. 5, d. 29, l. 237-240.

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it is sad that haste and caution were shown on the part of the Stavka. Everything spoke against them. It was necessary to act more thoughtfully and more decisively, that is, I repeat, to deliver two blows under the base of the Orlovsky ledge. To do this, it was only necessary to start the operation not

how much later.

It seems to me that the Headquarters did not take into account the fact that the enemy troops (2nd Panzer and 9th Armies) were on the Orlovsky bridgehead for more than a year, which allowed them to create a strong, defense in depth.

We now know that the plan was developed by the General Staff in March-April 1943. It should be taken into account that at the time of his approval, Stalin was still under the impression of previous experience, and first of all of the successful but very protracted Stalingrad counteroffensive. Then a bold and deep envelopment of the largest enemy grouping was conceived. But, as you know, its liquidation required a lot of effort and time: it lasted until February 2, 1943. And yet, probably, the adoption of this version of the plan was influenced by the fact that the Germans, as if in retaliation for

Stalingrad, in February - March 1943, they successfully carried out a counteroffensive in the north of Ukraine, where Rybalko's 3rd tank army was thoroughly battered, and on March 16, our troops again left the city of Kharkov.

For two and a half months the plan remained unchanged. And during this time, global changes took place on the Soviet-German front. The German divisions had time to replenish with men and rearm. The front has stabilized. The Oryol bridgehead was especially strong. It was fortified by the Germans not only along the front of the arc, but also inside. Very strongly were fortified just those cities that were the main objects of encirclement and assault by our troops - Mtsensk, Bolkhov, Orel, Kromy.

Analyzing the actions of our troops in Operation Kutu Call, it is easy to establish that they were based on a somewhat revised plan for the Oryol offensive operation.

" Rokossovsky K.K. Soldier duty. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1997. Pp. 281.

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February - March 1943, which ended unsuccessfully for our troops.

This is probably why not only the General Staff Headquarters took control of the preparations for the Oryol summer offensive operation, but also the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command .. Its representatives often go to the front, get acquainted with the situation, understand and help.

As Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army A.M. Vasilevsky took part in the planning and preparation of operations in the Kursk Bulge region and, as a representative of the Headquarters of the All-Russian Supreme Command, inspected the Bryansk Front and the left wing of the Western Front three times (May 14–23, May 26–June 2, June 5–9, 1943).

Being for a long time in those places of the Oryol Bulge that were planned to break through the defense of the German troops, Vasilevsky constantly informed the Headquarters about the preparation of the troops of the fronts and armies for the upcoming offensive.

The book "The Battle of Kursk"!, which contains the general plan of the Oryol operation and which is still guided by all researchers of the Great Patriotic War, was published in 1947. The Oryol offensive operation "Kutuzov" had already become a fait accompli by the time it was released, and therefore the military historians of the General Staff present in this book the plan of the operation as it actually took place, and are silent about its original version, which guided all military leaders in the first days of the attack. Therefore, they missed (consciously or not) one very important component of the plan for this

operations.

After the 61st Army of the Bryansk Front was supposed to break through the enemy's defenses and quickly (within three to four days) leave from the north to Naryshkino, the troops of the 63rd, and then the 3rd Army, also broke through the defenses on their sector of the front (near Novosil) and advancing around Orel from the southeast, they were supposed to meet in the Naryshkino area with the troops of the 61st Army. Thus, Bolkhovskaya and Mtsensk and part-

' Battle of Kursk. In 2 books. - M.: Military publishing house, 1947.

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Typically, the Oryol groupings of the enemy found themselves in the first (inner) ring of encirclement (with the city of Orel in the center).

The second (outer) ring of encirclement around the entire Oryol grouping of the enemy was to form the troops of the left wing of the Western Front (11th Guards Army with 1st 5th Tank Corps), advancing from north to south in the direction of Khotynets, Karachev, and the troops of the Central Front (13th and 2nd Panzer Armies), advancing from south to north, also in the direction of Khotynets and Karachev.

This plan is very clearly visible on the map-scheme of the Oryol offensive operation in February-March 1943, approved by Stalin.

The plan of the operation "Kutuzov" can be traced when one gets acquainted with archival documents of the 3rd and 4th tank armies that participated in the battles on the Orlovsky bridgehead.

Thus, the Military Council of the Bryansk Front set the task: "3 TA, building on the success of the 63rd Army, from the morning of 19.07 strikes in the direction of Bortnoye, Stanovoye, Stanovoy Kolodez with the task of cutting the Orel-Kursk railway and capturing crossings on the river. Rybnitsa on the site Lobanovo, Zmievo. For Mokhovoe and Arkhangelsk, which are nodes of resistance, do not get involved in the battle.

By the end of the day on July 19, capture the area of Pugachevka, Stanovoy Kolodez; forward detachments to seize the airfield in the area of Grachevka, Pugachevka.

In accordance with the instructions of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, "The Military Council of the Western Front set the task for the 4th Tank Army: to enter the gap in sector 8 of the SC of the 11th Guards. And, with a strike in the southwestern direction, cut off the main communications of the enemy in the Khotynets area and, by the end of 07/26/43, reach the Krasnaya Polyana, Khotynets, Mayaki, Bogdanovka, Bykovo, Bunino, Naryshkino area, creating conditions for encircling the Orlov-Bolkhov group adversary."

1 TsAMO RF, f. 315, op. 4440, d. 18, l.4-5. ? There, f. 323, op. 4756, d. 12, l. 6.

ORLOV BRIDGE HEAD - IMPRESSIBLE BASTION OF THE GERMANS

The territory of the Oryol strategic bridgehead of the Germans was very convenient for defense and made offensive operations extremely difficult. A natural obstacle to the offensive of our troops in the western direction were rivers, flowing mostly from south to north (Oka, Zusha, Neruch, Oleshnya, Optukha, Nugr, Vytebet, Resseta), others - from north to south (Bolva, Desna). The enemy made extensive use of these rivers to organize defensive lines and cut-off positions. Smaller rivers and streams (Fominka, Mashok, Nepolod, Ors, Mokhovitsa, Tskan, Orlik, Revna, etc.), crossing the combat area, also favored the defense and hampered the offensive of the Red Army units. The leading edge of the enemy's main defensive zone ran mainly along the banks of the Zhizdra, Oka, Zusha, and Neruch rivers. To attack the main line of defense, our units needed to force these rivers. |

The combat area, especially its southeastern part, has densely located settlements. The largest of them are: Orel, Bolkhov, Mtsensk, Karachev, Kromy, Hotynets, Zhizdra, Khvastovich, Zikeevo, Dmitrovsk-Orlovsky. These points, being important junctions of highways and railways, were the main places of resistance in the German defense system. The cities of Oryol, Bolkhov, Mtsensk, Khotynets, Karachev and Kromy, on which the defense of the entire Orlovsky bridgehead relied, were of particular importance. The significance of these cities for

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defense was strengthened by the fact that they were located on rivers or on commanding heights and provided the enemy with favorable conditions for organizing defense.

The most important railway line for the enemy was the Bryansk-Orel road, from which the following tracks departed: Bryansk-Zikeevo, Bryansk-Tereben, Orel-Mtsensk, Orel-Zalegoshch, Orel-Kursk, Bryansk-Navlya. Of the highways, the most important were Bryansk - Orel, Bolkhov - Orel - Kromy, Orel - Mtsensk. The enemy also had convenient dirt roads radiating in different directions from such nodes as Orel, Bolkhov, Karachev, Kromy, Zhizdra, Zikeevo, Khvastovich, Khotynets, Znamenskoye, Protasovo, Mokhovoe, Zmievka, Shablykino, and others. Dense road network the area of combat operations made it possible for German troops to widely maneuver on the battlefield, to organize an uninterrupted supply of ammunition and food.

At the beginning of the offensive, our troops had at their disposal only one Tula-Yelets railway line and the Tula-Kozelsk, Tula-Mtsensk, Volovo-Belev, Yelets-Verkhovye roads branching off from it, as well as the Tula-Mtsensk automobile road. The limited road network hampered the maneuver of our troops and greatly hampered the work of the rear.

While working with the materials of the Army Group "Center", stored in the State Military Archive of Germany, I discovered a document containing very valuable information about the geographical and climatic features of Central Russia.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GERMAN DEFENSE SYSTEM

In front of the troops of the three fronts of the Red Army was the enemy's well-fortified Orlovsky strategic foothold.

In the zone of the left wing of the Western Front, the right wing and the center of the Bryansk Front up to Vyazha inclusive, the Germans began the construction of a defensive line from the moment

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stabilization of the front on the banks of the rivers Oka, Zushi and Neruch, i.e. almost a year and a half before the start of our offensive, and to the south - in front of the left wing of the Bryansk and the entire defense zone of the Central Front - from the end of March 1943.

Attaching great importance to the Orlovsky bridgehead, the enemy created a strong defense here with a developed system of field fortifications, reliably covering them with engineering barriers. All approaches to enemy positions were shot through by frontal, oblique and flanking multi-layered fire. In the depths of the defense, the terrain was well prepared for the maneuver of tanks and large military formations, and in the event of a breakthrough of the front line by our troops, it provided the possibility of quick and strong counterattacks. Most of the settlements located on the front line, at road junctions and in depth, the Germans prepared for a solid all-round defense.

In the depths of the defense, intermediate and rear defensive lines were prepared, as well as cut-off positions, equipped according to the type of lines of the main resistance zone. Most of these lines were not occupied by troops. The enemy had such lines and positions:

- since Oka from Shashkino to Paslovo and further along the river. Optukha to Zmievka;

- according to rr. Oka and Kroma on the Paslovo, Oryol, Kromy section,

Koroskovo;

- since. Neruch from Vasilievka to Pozdeevov;
- since. Nugr in the area Krutogorye, Znamenskoye;
- since. Mashok from Nagai to its mouth;
- at the turn of Glinnaya, Dubna, Sorokino;
- at the turn of Shubnik, Khotkovo, Ulyanovo;
- according to rr. Resseta and Obelna from Khotkovo to Lyada, then east and south of Karachev, south and east of Goshch and further along the river. Revna before it flows into the Desna.

In order to organize resistance in the depths of the Orlovsky bridgehead, the enemy, using the efforts of engineering and sapper units, with the involvement of forced labor of the local population, prepared defense lines along the banks of the Vytebet, Bolva and Desna rivers.

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Using the favorable terrain conditions for the organization of the defense, the Germans created a strong, deeply echeloned defense, the breakthrough of which required great exertion of forces from our troops and the extensive use of artillery, tanks and aircraft in the offensive.

The gaps between the strongholds were covered by separate firing points. The first line of defense consisted of three trenches, in which firing platforms for machine guns and dugouts were located at a distance of 50-100 meters from one another. Part of the firing sites were moved 5-19 meters forward to conduct flanking fire. In the trenches, after 5-6 meters, there were separate cells for shooters. A large number of reserve firing positions were prepared in trenches and strongholds. Armored caps were installed in a number of areas.

In front of the enemy trenches there were wire barriers in one or two rows, mostly of a portable type (slingshots, a fence on metal stakes, etc.), sound and light signals were hung on the wire. The wire fences were heavily mined and filled with all sorts of "surprises": aerial bombs, hand grenades, and so on. Between the wire barriers and the first line of trenches, as well as in a number of areas in the depths of the defense, minefields were created from anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, which, as a rule, were under the cover of machine-gun and mortar fire (mining depth reached 10 km rear from the front edge of the rony).

GROUP COMPOSITION

BEFORE THE BATTLE OF OREL

TROOPS OF THE RED ARMY

As noted above, three fronts were involved in the implementation of the Kutuzov operation plan: Western, Bryansk and Central. Their troops were to break into the enemy defenses and, "advancing in the general direction on Orel, surround the enemy's Oryol grouping, cut it into pieces and destroy it."

The composition and tasks of the troops of the Bryansk Front (commander - Colonel General Vasily Danilovich Sokolovsky)

By decision of the commander of the Western Front, General of the Army V.D. Sokolovsky, the enemy's defense was broken through by the main shock group of the front - the 11th Guards Army - on the Glinaya - Ozhigovo front section (14 km) in the direction of Bolkhov and had as its goal:

a) with part of the forces to advance in a southerly direction on Khotynets with the task of interrupting all railway and automobile communications of the 2nd tank and 9th army of the enemy;

6) in cooperation with the 61st Army of the Bryansk Front, encircle and destroy part of the forces of the 2nd Tank Army
tivist.

The strike force included 12 rifle divisions, 2 tank corps, 4 tank brigades and 2 breakthrough tank regiments, 4 artillery and 2 anti-aircraft artillery

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Ryan divisions of the RGC. During the offensive, the 25th Tank Corps and the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps were transferred from the Stavka reserve to the army.

11th Guards Army under the command of Lieutenant General I.Kh. Bagramyan, which delivered the main blow, included twelve rifle divisions (1, 5, 11, 16, 18, 26, Z1, 83, 84th Guards, 108, 169, 217th), two tank corps (1st and 5th), four tank brigades (10th, 29th, 43rd guards and 213th), three breakthrough artillery divisions (3rd and 14th), two guards tank regiments of breakthrough (2nd and 4th), 1453rd self-propelled artillery regiment, three anti-aircraft artillery divisions (14th, 17th and 48th), 5th guards mortar brigade of the RGK! and many other artillery, mortar and engineer units.

Delivering the main blow in the direction of Krapivna, to the

During the second day of the offensive, Baghramyan's army was supposed to reach the line of the Resseta River (from its mouth to the crossing at Ktsyn), Vesnina, Krapivna, Sorokino. In the future, hiding behind part of the forces along the banks of the Resset River, the army was to develop success with the main forces in the general direction towards Bolkhov and, together with the troops of the 61st Army of the Bryansk Front, encircle and destroy the enemy's Bolkhov grouping.

In addition, the army received the task: part of the forces to advance to the south, to Uzkoye.

The offensive of the left wing of the Western Front was very closely linked with the actions not only of the right wing of the Bryansk Front (61st Army) to encircle and destroy the Bolkhov grouping of the enemy, but also with the offensive of the entire Bryansk Front, Colonel General M.M. Popov.

50th Army under the command of Lieutenant General I.V. Boldin had seven rifle divisions (17, 49, 64, 212, 324, 326

'
Guards mortar units of the RGK were armed with mortars BM-8, BM-13 and BM-31 ("Katyusha").

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i413th), 196th tank brigade, 1536th self-propelled artillery regiment and other artillery, mortar and engineer units.

The 50th Army, which occupied the defense zone to the right of the 11th Guards Army in the Zaprudnoye-Rechitsa sector, was assigned the following tasks:

a) by the offensive of part of the forces of its left wing on Zikeya, cut off the German withdrawal routes to the west and south-west;

6) to protect the right flank of the 11th Guards Army from possible enemy counterattacks from the west.

Front line connections:

1st Tank Corps Lieutenant General V.V. Butkova (89th, 117th, 159th brigade, 44th motorized brigade, 1437th sap, 86th mtsb, 1514th iptap, 108th minp);

5th Tank Corps of Lieutenant General M.G. Sakhno (24th, 41st, 70th brigade, 5th msbr, 1435th sap, 1515th iptap, 731st oiptdn, 277th mini, 1708th zenap).

1st Air Army under the command of Lieutenant General M.M. Gromov included the 201st, 202nd, 203rd, 234th and 235th fighter, 204th bomber, 213th mixed, 214th, 224th, 231st, 232nd and 233rd assault air divisions.

In view of the fact that from July 12 to August 7, only one operation, Orlovskaya, took place on the western direction of the Soviet-German front, the aviators had to cover and support the advancing troops of the left wing of the Western (50th and 11th Guards armies) and the right wing of the Bryansk (61st Army) fronts.

The offensive actions of the left wing of the Western Front were very closely linked with the actions not only of the right wing of the Bryansk Front (61st Army) to encircle and destroy the Bolkhov group of the enemy, but also with all the troops of the Bryansk Front, Colonel General M.M. Popov.

During the offensive, the 11th and 4th tank armies, the 25th tank and 2nd guards cavalry corps were transferred from the Stavka reserve to the Western Front.

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Reserve troops

To fulfill the directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command to defeat the "Enemy Oryol grouping in order to capture the city of Orel" the Soviet command gradually increased the forces intended for the elimination of the Orlovsky parade ground, and already during the operation "Kutuzov" additionally introduced the 3rd and 4th tank, 11th armies, as well as the 2nd guards cavalry and 25th tank corps. It should be noted that the lion's share of the Stavka reserve (with the exception of Rybalko's 3rd Tank Army) was sent to the sector of the front where the 11th Guards Army of General Baghramyan was fighting.

11th Army Lieutenant General I.I. Fedyuninsky was introduced on July 20 on the left flank of the Western Front, then on July 30, as part of the Bryansk Front, it participated in the liberation of the northwestern section of the Orlovsky bridgehead and included eight rifle divisions (4.96, 135, 197, 260, 273, 323 and 369th), 8th Guards, 42nd

and the 225th tank regiments.

4th Tank Army Lieutenant General V.M. Badanov participated in the Oryol operation from July 26 as part of the Western Front, and from July 30 as part of the Bryansk Front. The corps of this army, the 11th Tank Corps, the 30th Ural Volunteer Tank Corps, and the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps, took part in the battles for the liberation of the Orlovsky bridgehead.

2nd Guards Cavalry Corps, Lieutenant General V.V. Kryukov, together with the 4th Tank Army, first took part in the liberation of the current territory of the Orlovsky Polesie, and also played a key role in the final stage in the battles for the final liberation of the Orlovsky bridgehead - in the Bryansk offensive operation.

The corps included the following units and formations: 3rd, 4th guards and 20th cd, 1812th sap, 149th guards. iptap, 2nd Guards. oiptdn, 10th Guards. MP, 60th Guards. mdn, 1730th zenap.

1 Directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command No. 30041 dated February 6, 1943, to the Commander of the Bryansk Front to defeat the Oryol-Bryansk enemy grouping (TsAMO RF, f. 3, op. 4546, d. 12, l. 177-178).

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Samples of military equipment of the USSR

25th Tank Corps Major General F.G. Anikushin (111, 162, 175th brigade, 20th brigade,
53rd mtsb, 746th iptd, 1497th iptap, 459th minp, 1702nd zenap).

The composition and tasks of the troops of the Bryansk Front
(commander - Colonel General Markian Mikhailovich
Popov)

The troops of the Bryansk Front, on their left wing, delivered the main blow with the
adjacent flanks of the 3rd and 63rd armies in the general Novosil-Orel direction with the task
of enveloping Orel from the north and south, capturing the city and developing the offensive in
a westerly direction. The strike force included 12 rifle divisions, one tank corps and 8 tank and tank
self-propelled regiments.

Another blow was delivered by the troops of the Bryansk Front by the forces of the 61st
Army from the Karagashinka-Middle Rostock line in the western direction to Bolkhov with the
task of interacting with the troops of the 11th Guards Army to encircle the enemy troops
defending in the Bolkhov region and destroy them. Part of the forces of the army troops
struck in a southeasterly direction on Tel'chie, having the task of connecting with the strike
group in the Karandakovo area in order to cut off the German units defending at the Troitskoye-
Mtsensk line. The strike force had six rifle ranges

vision, one tank corps, one tank brigade and one tank regiment.

61st Army under the command of Lieutenant General P.A. Belova included eight rifle divisions (12th, 76th and 77th guards, 97th, 110th, 336th, 356th and 415th), one tank corps (20th), 68th tank brigade, 36th th Tank Regiment, 1539th Self-Propelled Artillery Regiment and other artillery, mortar and engineer units.

The 61st Army delivered the main blow with the forces of the 9th Guards Rifle Corps (12th, 76th and 77th Guards Rifle Divisions) and the 68th Tank Brigade in the Karagashinka-Middle Rostock sector (10 km along the front) in the general direction of Tolkachevo , Bolkhov. The offensive of the corps was supported by the main forces of the artillery of the army.

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By the end of the first day of the offensive, the 9th Guards Rifle Corps had the task of capturing the Rakovskii-Kishkino-Odnonitok-Martemyanovo line, and then, cutting off the Bolkhov-Orel highway with part of its forces, advancing on Bolkhov and capturing it.

In order to develop a breakthrough and advance in the direction of Novyi Sinets, the 20th Tank Corps and the 336th Rifle Division were concentrated in the sector of the 9th Guards Rifle Corps in the Sorokoletovo, Pesochnoe, Kuzmenka area (Arsenyevsk district of the Tula region).

The expansion of the breakthrough towards the flanks and ensuring the actions of the strike force from the northwest and south was assigned to the 97th and 110th rifle divisions, which were in the second echelon:

The 97th, advancing in the direction of Kurasovo, Annino, had the task of capturing the Ulyanovo-Lokhan line, together with the 356th rifle division, by the end of the first day of the operation;

The 110th, advancing in the direction of Kornilovo, Karandakovo, received the task of reaching the Azarovo-Verkhneye Ushcherevo line by the same time.

Front line connection:

20th Tank Corps, Lieutenant General I.G. Lazarev (8th guards, 80th, 155th brigade, 7th guards brigade, 96th mtsb, [419th sap, 1505th iptap, 735th oiptdn, 291st minp, 1711th zenap).

3rd Army under the command of Lieutenant General A.V. Gorbatov had six rifle divisions (235, 283, 269, 308, 342 and 380th), the 20th breakthrough artillery division, two separate tank regiments (82nd and 114th), 1538th self-propelled artillery regiment and other artillery, mortar and engineer units.

The army dealt the main blow with its left flank - with the forces of three rifle divisions (235th, 380th and 308th) and two tank regiments (82nd and 114th) with reinforcements. The army was given the task of forcing the river. Zush, break through the enemy defenses in the Izmailovo-Vyazhi sector (9 km along the front) and develop the offensive in the general direction of Staraya Otrada. With the release of troops to the border of the river. Fox turn the main forces of the army to the southwest, strike at

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Eagle violr. Oka and, in cooperation with units of the 63rd Army, capture the city. Upon reaching the strike group of the Dobrovody-Protasovo line, turn part of the forces to the north and, advancing on the Dumchino station, together with the troops of the 61st Army, encircle and destroy the Mtsensk group against

Nika.

On the first day of the offensive, the army was to break through the enemy defenses to a depth of 10-12 km and reach the Krasny-Zhelyabug line; on the second day - reach the line Dobrovody - Titovo (24-26 km)! and the third - go to the Oka River (34-36 km), intercepting the highway and the Mtsensk - Orel? railway in the Staraya Otrada area.

The right wing of the army - the 342nd, 283rd and 269th rifle divisions, reinforced by one anti-tank brigade and two divisions of armored trains - was supposed to fetter the enemy's Mtsensk grouping by stubborn defense and active actions.

The 63rd Army under the command of Lieutenant General V.Ya. Kolpakchi had seven rifle divisions (5th, 129th, 41st, 250th, 287th, 348th and 397th), the 231st separate tank regiment, the 1452nd self-propelled artillery regiment and other artillery, mortar and engineer-sapper parts.

The army received the task: closely cooperating with the left wing of the 3rd Army, to break through the enemy defenses with its right flank in the area (claim.) Vyazhi - Orlovka (9 km along the front) and, rapidly developing the offensive in the general direction to Stanovoy Kolodez, reach boundary of the railway and highway Orel - Zmievska; later, using the Oka River as a cover on the left, the army was to turn with its main forces to the north and bypass Orel from the south. At the same time, the army delivered an auxiliary blow to Orel from the east, from the frontier. Optuha.

It was envisaged that the 1st Guards Tank Corps should be introduced after breaking through the tactical depth

1 In parentheses is the distance from the front line from which the offensive began.

In TsAMO RF, f. 202, op. 5, file 1541 (plan-map of the actions of the 63rd Army in the Oryol operation).

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enemy defense. Developing the success of the breakthrough, on the third day of the offensive, he had to go to the Stanovoi Kolodeza area.

It was planned that on the first day of the offensive, the 63rd Army would reach the Zhelyabug-Kalganovka line (15-16 km), on the second day, the Mokhovoe-Neplyuyev-Kamenka line (30-32 km), and on the third day, the Ermolaevo-Pavlovo line. Stanovoy Kolodez - Novopetrovka (42-44 km).

Front line connections:

3rd Tank Army Lieutenant General P.S. Rybalko took part in the operation from July 19 to July 27 as part of the Bryansk Front, and then until mid-August - as part of the Central Front. The 12th and 15th tank corps, the 2nd mechanized corps, the 91st tank brigade and other units and subunits took part in the battles on Oryol land.

25th Rifle Corps Major General P.V. Pererva (186th, 238th and 362nd Rifle Divisions), intended to develop success in the sector of the 3rd Army, was located in the area of Chern, Pashutino, Speshnevo - in the reserve of the front.

1st Guards Tank Corps, Lieutenant General M.Kh. Panova (15th, 1st Bi of the 17th Guards Tank Brigade; 1st Guards Msbr, 34th Guards Tank Brigade, 65th MCB, 732nd Oiptdn, 1001st Iptap, 455th Mini, 80th Guards .zenap).

15th Air Army under the command of Lieutenant General Nantes N.F. Naumenko included the 3rd and 4th guards, 234th and 315th fighter, 113th bomber and 284th night bomber, 225th, 307th and 308th assault aviation divisions, 99th Guards Reconnaissance Aviation Regiment.

The troops of the 15th Air Army were tasked with covering and supporting the advancing troops of the right wing and the central sector of the Bryansk Front (61st and 3rd armies).

During the offensive, the 3rd Panzer Army was transferred from the Stavka reserve to the Bryansk Front.

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This corps was handed over to the 3rd army and was introduced into the breakthrough at the Vyazhi - Izmailovo section.

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The composition and tasks of the troops of the Central Front (commander - General of the Army

Konstantin Konstantinovich Rokossovsky)

The troops of the Central Front, in accordance with the decision of the front commander, were to advance on July 15, i.e. three days after the end of the defensive operation in the Orel-Kursk direction.

The main blow was delivered by the troops of the Central Front with the forces of the 13th Army in the direction of Olkhovatka, Kromy and further to Khotynets, in order to interrupt the enemy's communications, cover the Oryol grouping of Germans from the south and southwest and assist the troops of Bryansk and the left wing of the Western fronts in its destruction.

Units and formations of the 2nd Panzer Army, in accordance with the plan, were introduced into the breakthrough made by the 13th Army in order to develop an offensive in the operational depth of the enemy's defense.

The composition of the strike force is 12 rifle divisions, the 2nd tank army in full strength, as well as two tank corps (9th and 19th).

48th Army Lieutenant General P.L. Romanenko with reinforcement units was on the right flank of the Central Front in a strip 38 km long between Protasovo on the left and Panskaya on the right. It consisted of seven rifle divisions (16th (Lithuanian), 73rd, 137th, 143rd, 170th, 202nd and 399th), three separate tank regiments (45th, 193rd and 229th), 1540th artillery - self-propelled regiment and other artillery, mortar and engineer units.

The 48th Army had the task of:

a) on the right flank, hold the occupied line;

6) attack the enemy on the left flank with two rifle divisions in the Aleksandrovka-(claim) Krasnaya Slobidka sector and, striking in the direction of Shamshino, reach the Nagorny-Shamshino line by the end of July 17; in the future to develop success on Zmievka.

13th Army Lieutenant General N.P. Pukhova with reinforcement units occupied the most critical section of the front in 32 km, limited on the right by the demarcation line with the 48th Army

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and Tagino on the left. It consisted of twelve divisions (6th, 70th, 75th Guards, 8th, 15th, 74th, 81st, 148th, 307th Rifle, 2nd, 4th Airborne), 129th Tank Brigade, five tank regiments (27th and 30th guards, 43rd, 58th and 237th), the 1540th self-propelled artillery regiment and many other artillery, mortar and engineer units.

The 13th Army had the task of going on the offensive in the morning of July 15 and striking in the general direction of Gremyachevo. Then, interacting with the troops of the 48th and 70th armies, destroy the opposing enemy in order to reach the line (claim.) Shamshino - Vesely Poselok by the end of July 17, in the future to develop an attack on Nesterovo.

70th Army Lieutenant General I.V. Galanina occupied a strip 62 km wide, bounded on the right by the demarcation line with the 13th Army and Mikhailovka on the left. It consisted of eight rifle divisions (102, 106, 132, 175, 140, 162, 211 and 280th), one rifle brigade (2nd Fighter) and three separate tank regiments (240th, 251st and 259th), as well as artillery, mortar and engineer units.

The army received the task: from the morning of July 15, to advance in the general direction to Nizhny Tagino and by the end of July 17, the main forces of the shock group of the army to reach the line of Nizhny Tagi no - Morozikha; further develop a strike on Kromy.

65th Army of Lieutenant General P.I. Batova with reinforcement units defended a section of the front with a length of 82 km in a strip bounded on the right by a demarcation line with the 70th Army and Selino on the left. It consisted of nine rifle divisions (37th Guards, 69th, 60th, 149th, 181st, 193rd, 194th, 246th and 334th), the 115th Rifle Brigade, four separate tank regiments (29th Guards, 40, 84 and 255th) and other artillery, mortar and engineer units.

60th Army Lieutenant General I.D. Chernyakhovsky defended a section of the front with a length of 92 km in a strip bounded on the right by a demarcation line with the 65th Army and on the left by a demarcation line with the 38th Army of the Voronezh Front, and had five rifle divisions.

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visions (55th, 112th, 121st, 141st and 322nd) and two rifle brigades (129th and 248th).

This army did not participate in the battles to liberate the Orlovsky bridgehead from the Nazi invaders. She was on the defensive, occupying a site in the center of the Kursk ledge, and then on August 26, together with the troops of the Central Front, as part of the Chernigov-Pripyat operation, went on the offensive. On August 30, the troops of the 60th Army liberated Glukhov - two years after the occupation of this city by non-German troops.

2nd Tank Army Lieutenant General A.G. The motherland included the 3rd and 16th tank corps and the 11th guards tank brigade, the 130th and 563rd anti-tank artillery regiments, the 226th and 234th army mortar regiments and the 121st th Artillery Regiment. The army was in the second echelon and, in accordance with the plan of operation, had to be introduced into the breakthrough, carried out

taken by the troops of the 13th Army.

Front line connections:

9th Tank Corps Lieutenant General S.I. Bogdanov (23rd, 95th, 108th brigade, 8th brigade, 1454th, 1455th sap, 730th oipdn).

19th Tank Corps Major General I.D. Vasiliev (79, 101, 202nd brigade, 26th msebr, 91st mtsb).

16th Air Army under the command of Lieutenant General S.I. Rudenko included the 1st Guards, 282nd, 283rd and 286th Fighter, 221st and 241st Bomber and 271st Night Bomber, 2nd Guards Assault, 299th Assault Aviation Divisions, 16th th reconnaissance aviation, 6th medical aviation regiment, 14th corrective aviation squadron.

The troops of the 16th Air Army were entrusted with the task of covering and supporting the advancing troops of the Central Front.

So, by the end of July 1943, on the relatively small territory of the Orlovsky bridgehead, the Red Army troops participated in the hostilities as part of 16 armies: 10 combined arms, 3 tank and 3 air armies. They are about

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95 rifle divisions, 9 artillery divisions, 4 guards mortar divisions of the RGK, 15 anti-aircraft artillery divisions, 13 tank corps (of which 6 were part of tank armies), 2 mechanized corps (part of tank armies), a large number individual tank, tank-self-propelled brigades and regiments, guards mortar regiments of the RGK and many other units and formations (see in detail: "The Battle of Oryol - two years: facts, statistics, analysis." Book Two, Appendix No. 1, table No. 1, p. 716).

STRENGTH AND ARMAMENT OF THE THREE FRONTS IN THE OREL STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE

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184071 223 140 366 709 773920 PPSchiPPD submachine guns |
69356 120059 274883

Easel and manual

ray 13329

15813 19852 48994

Machine guns DShK 394 | 356 845 1595
Total machine guns | 13723 16169 | 20697 50589 PTR 6762
14209 about 13948 _| 34919 Sabers 9947
9947 Field guns]
2709 3793 4974 11476 i, l 1265 1363 1894 4522
Anti-aircraft guns ZI 370 617 1298
Vtya. 2537 mm | 263 26 | 413 922 Total
guns | 3424 4163 | 5170 12757

" The table was compiled by the author according to: TsAMO RF, f. 202. op. 7, d. 108; \$.
203, op. 87, d. 40-44; f. 208, op. 2574, d. 89; f. 204, op. 7889, d. 5; f. 357, op. 5973, d. 25; f. 358, op. 5916, d. 354;
op. 5920, house 9; f. 393, op. 9011, 16; f. 395, op. 9142, d. 18; f. 16 BA, op. 6480, d.9; Russia and the
USSR in the Wars of the 20th Century: A Statistical Study. — M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2001. P. 286; Battle of Kursk -
M.: Nauka, 1970. Pp. 481, 484.

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Mortars | 3767 5065 5522 | 14354 | Total guns
and mortars

7502 9228 1309 28039

Comrade

a 596 3 | 232 1001 | -13,
-31) | | Frames M-30
468 468 _|

Total tins 1041 1242 1429 372 Heavyweight
765 891 927 2583 of them | SAU 87 No. 200 63
|. 350
Total tanks and self-propelled
guns 1128 a 1442 1492 | 4062 | Total heavy tanks | and self-
propelled guns 852 | 1091 990
2933 Aircraft of all types 1322 | 995
706 3023 Total vehicles 12472 20 148 22666 55 286 Wh.
trucks 6486 16466 17 748 r 40700 Tractors and prime
movers 1236 1035 1075 3346 | Horses | 28781 | 33450
55032 | 117263 |

Note: The presented quantitative indicators do not reflect complete data. In fact, the
number of people and the number of weapons of the three fronts that took part in the Oryol
strategic

offensive operation, more, because during July and August 1943, the troops were replenished with human resources and weapons (0 especially tanks) from the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. For example, at the end of July, Baghramyan's 11th Guards Army received a reinforcement of 25,000 men.

In the scientific and historical literature, the number of troops of the Red Army who took part in the Oryol operation "Kutuzov" is defined as 1,286,000 people.

However, a thorough study of the primary sources stored in the Podolsky Archive (TsAMO RF), and first of all, the reporting documentation reflecting the number of corps, armies and fronts in July 1943 (copies of these reports were sent to the General Staff of the Red Army), allows us to make the following conclusions.

1 Battle of Kursk. In 2 books. - M.: Gospolitizdat, 1947. Book. 1. Page 13-19; Battle of Kursk Ed. Candidate of Military Sciences Major General I.V. Parotkin. - M.: Nauka, 1970. Pp. 490-494.

53

1. The number of the Oryol group of troops of the Red Army, 1,286,000 people, is given as of July 1, 1943, without taking into account the units and formations of the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command.

2. The total number of Soviet troops who took part in the Oryol strategic offensive operation was 1,510,464 people.

3. Thus, at the final stage of the Battle of Orel (Oryol strategic offensive operation), the grouping of Red Army troops was one and a half times the number of our troops in the Battle of Moscow (Moscow strategic offensive operation - 1,021,700 people), in the Battle of Stalingrad (Stalingrad offensive major operation - 1,143,500 people).

TROOPS OF THE WEHRMACHT

At the beginning of July 1943, the largest grouping of German troops on the entire Soviet-German front was located on the Orlovsky bridgehead. It formed gradually over twenty months. In front of the left wing of the Western and in general in front of the Bryansk and Central fronts, the German command held large forces. It was clearly afraid of our attack on the Orlovsky bridgehead and, in particular, an attack from the northeast on the flank of the Oryol-Bryansk grouping. Therefore, it was in this dangerous area that the operational reserves of the enemy were located: the 112th Infantry Division - in the Bolkhov area; 5th Panzer Division - Dudorovsky, Nagaya, Ulyanovo; 8th Panzer and

The 707th Infantry Division was based in the Bryansk region. South of Krom were the main reserves of the 9th Army, which did not participate in the attack on Kursk in accordance with the plan: the 36th motorized, 12th tank and 10th motorized divisions.

As a result of the fighting in the framework of the operation "Tsita del" on the northern face of the Kursk Bulge (on the southern border of the Oryol ledge), the troops of the 9th Army lost from 5 to 11

54

July 1943, 21,136 people, of which 4,514 people were irretrievably lost.

Considering that about half of the wounded German soldiers returned to their units after ten days of treatment in field hospitals, as well as the replenishment of units by marching companies, then the Oryol grouping of the enemy in number

vein has not changed much.

There were also no significant changes in the state of armament. In a defensive battle on the northern face of the Kursk Bulge, German tank units irretrievably lost only 88 steel vehicles in one week?. Stationary German artillery also had minimal losses.

Thus, after the operation "Citadel" the German grouping of troops located on the Oryol ledge, neither quantitatively nor qualitatively almost

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Composition, armament and losses of the 20th TD (document from the military archive of Germany)

1 VA-MA E V used 564. 2

Ibid., VN 10/65.

hasn't changed. Moreover, at that time part of the German tank and motorized divisions (regardless of their participation in the battle south of Orel) received the latest models of military equipment, especially the T-GU tanks (with a long-barreled gun [43 / 48), T-U , T-UG and self-propelled artillery mounts (ZS Shi \$0 TU). In July 1943, the German military industry produced 511 tanks of these modifications and 451 self-propelled guns. Naturally, most of this first-class weapons came to the most "hot" spots, the most important of which was the Orlovsky bridgehead.

In front of the 10th Army of the Western Front, north and west of the city of Kirov, units of the 56th Tank Corps, which was part of the 4th Army (131st, 321st Infantry Divisions), as well as the 339th Infantry Division of the 2nd German tank army. The main forces of the 2nd Panzer Army were defending in front of the units of the left wing of the Western Front and the Bryansk Front: the 110th Infantry Division - (claimed) Zaprudnoe, Paliki; 296th Infantry Division - (suit) Paliki, Yasenok; 134th Infantry Division - (suit) Yasenok, Rechitsa; 211th Infantry Division - (suit) Rechitsa, Glinnaya; 293rd Infantry Division - (claim) Glinnaya, (claim) Goskovo; 25th motorized division - Goskovo, (claim) Ulyanovo; 208th Infantry Division - Ulyanovo, Tolkachevo; 350th Infantry Regiment of the 221st Security Division, subordinate to the 112th Infantry Division - (claim) Tolkachevo, (claim) Shashkino; 34th Infantry Division - Shashkino, Yadrino; 56th Infantry Division - (claim.) Yadrino, (claim.) Vyazhi; 262nd Infantry Division - Vyazhi, Vasilyevka. Opposite the junction of the Bryansk and Central Fronts, the 299th Infantry Division was defending. Further to the southwest and west (to Sevska) units of the 9th Army (292, 383, 216, 78, 86, 6, 31, 7, 258, 102, 72, 45, 137, 251st Infantry, 18 , 9th and 2nd tank divisions and four Jaeger battalions).

In the areas of Kholmy and Krolevets, the 20th and 1st security Hungarian divisions guarded the rear. The 221st security division was located in the Trubchevsk area.

1 See Müller-Hillebrand B. German Land Army 1933-1945. - M .: Izographus, Eksmo Publishing House, 2002. Pp. 730-731.

56

In the area of Nezhin, Starodub, Novozybkov, units of the 8th Hungarian Army Corps, the 102nd, 105th and 108th Infantry Divisions, acted against the partisans.

Thus, against the troops of the left wing of the Western Front, the Bryansk and Central Fronts, 32 divisions and 4 separate jaeger battalions operated in the first line. There were seven infantry and tank divisions in reserve, which had not yet taken part in battles, and six more security divisions were located in the rear. Basic reserves

were concentrated against the left wing of the Western front

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The number of armored vehicles of the 9th TD (document from the military archive of Germany)

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that. Until July 12, three divisions were in reserve in the southern sector against the troops of the Central Front.

The main operational reserves of the enemy were located in the areas of Zhukovka, Bryansk, Lyudinovo and Ulyanovo, as well as Bolkhov. They covered the flank of the Oryol group and its communications from the north. The German command, fearing the advance of our troops from the north, and also having information about the concentration of large forces on the left wing of the Western Front, grouped its reserves with the expectation of occupying a flank position in relation to the probable direction of the offensive of the 50th and 11th Guards Armies . In this way, in the event of a breakthrough by the Soviet troops, the Germans sought to ensure themselves the opportunity, with strong blows at the base of the wedge of the broken units, to eliminate the breakthrough, restore the defenses, cut off and destroy our wedged grouping.

The enemy's tactical reserves, which, as a rule, consisted of a battalion (more rarely, a regiment) for each division, were located at a distance of 3-10 km from the front line of defense.

COMPOSITION OF THE GERMAN GROUP LOCATED ON
THE INTERNAL PERIMETER OF THE ORLOV ARCH (INFORMATION
IS INDICATED ON JULY 12, 1943)

Connection | Enclosures [. Ri Ye | 4th
Army M _| 131, 321 pd | | TU 110, 339,
296, 134 pd | | t 211.293rd pd, 25th yamd,
| | 2 208th Infantry Division -I Tank Army
34, 56, 262,
299th Infantry Division
XXXV At the disposal of 112,
707th Infantry Division XXW 383,
216th
Infantry Division, 78 Infantry Division

86, 292 pd, 18th yd 6th pd,
9, 2, 20th yd 31.7, 258, 102nd
pd 72, 45, 137, 251st pd

9th army

The troops of the German divisions indicated in the table were located on the bridgehead and held the defense along the front of the inner perimeter of the Oryol Bulge - from Kirov in the north to Sevs in the south. Most of these divisions immediately entered into combat operations, which began on July 11 in some sectors of the Oryol Bulge.

It must be taken into account that this table, as well as the diagram of the position of the troops, does not give an idea of the full composition of the German group, which was located on the Orlovsky bridgehead.

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The number of armored vehicles of the 18th TD (document from the military archive of Germany)

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Simply listing connections and parts is not enough to complete the picture. While working at the Federal Military Archive of Germany in Freiburg, I had the opportunity to get acquainted with the documents of the headquarters of the 2nd Panzer and 9th Field Army. They contain data on the full composition of the units of the united Orlov grouping of Model'.

This entire grouping was divided into corps, divided, in turn, into groups led by the most experienced generals (as a rule, the commander of a corps or division, for example, the Harpe group - commander of the XXXX] tank corps). Take for example the structure of the 35th Army Corps, commanded by General Rendu Lich?.

It consisted of five divisions, several divisions of artillery, two regiments of six-barreled mortars, two divisions of assault guns, three divisions of anti-tank self-propelled artillery and sapper-engineer units, as well as a special purpose tank brigade (45 T-MG tanks ("Tiger ")).

This corps held back the offensive of our troops from the eastern direction (3rd and 63rd armies), and on July 31 its headquarters was in Naryshkino.

Before our offensive, all divisions of the 2nd Panzer

armies, as well as divisions of the 9th army, which did not participate in the operation "Citadel", had almost full staff, and the documents speak eloquently about this.

1 Seogya Tezzt. Uetfaepde ipa Tharrep 4er Chesh5svep UMeBgtasv ipa UVaNep-5\$ t 7mpep UeNKper 1939-1945. 2. Vapa Ge Gapa\$Kgaye 1-5. Veafei. Ashfgipa 4er ischeyavep 4e5 Vipaezagsu\$-Miyayaerag-c1u\$; VA-MA 21-2/y. 7965.

. Retired Colonel-General Lothar Rendulich, Doctor of Science, author of many works, including the book "Troop Management", which was translated and published in the USSR by the Military Publishing House (1974). In the chapter "Some examples of the combat activity of German troops on the Eastern Front in 1941-1944" describes in detail the combat operations of the 35th army. corps on the Orlovsky planlarm in July 1943.

60

STAFF AND WEAPONS OF THE 299TH INFANTRY DIVISION

NAT JULY 1943

Composition Established |. In stock To
her |

Officers 346 | 341 Non-
commissioned officers (sergeants and foremen) 2339 2348
privates

10283 10288 its civilians (ÿÿ/5)

1494 2038 Total for the state 14462 15015

Without counting civilians 12968 12977

Armament Regular On alert Heavy anti-tank guns 32 28

Artillery guns 36 36 Machine guns | 520 520

The division is suitable for defense and for carrying out the boundary

offensive missions.

STAFF AND WEAPONS OF THE 5TH TANK DIVISION!

Officers - 334 Non-
commissioned officers -

2409 Privates - 8719

Civilians - 746

Total: - 12208 people

Tanks: T-Sh -2 T-

GU -93

Armored personnel carriers - 265
Anti-aircraft artillery -26 Motorcycles
- 816 tons 5 cars - 861

Guns: heavy anti-
tank - 35 Artillery -42 Machine guns - 1103

1 VA-MAVN 21-2\ 7965; VN 10/144.

61

SPAR AND ARMAMENT OF THE
GRENADE TANK DIVISION "GREAT
GERMANY" (RAMREVEVEMAPLEVOGU VOLUME "SVO\$ZOEOT\$SNTAMO")!

Officers - 524 Non-
commissioned officers - 4212
Privates - 18 160
Civilians - no

Total: - 22,896 people

T-Sh -3

TU - 142

T-U ("panther") - 45 (51st detachment) T-U
("tiger") -45

SAU - 65
Armored personnel carriers - 330
Mobile anti-aircraft installations - 30 Motorcycles
- 1545 Motor vehicles -
2017

Of these, on caterpillar tracks - 219

Guns: heavy anti-tank - 51 Artillery - 50 Machine guns
- 1728

It is also necessary to note the following circumstance: already during
the battle for Orel, in order to keep the situation under control and prevent the
Soviet troops from encircling the Oryol grouping, the German command urgently
transferred here from different sectors of the front, in particular from
Belgorod and Kharkov, several division.

The fact that significant forces were sent to the north of the Orlovsky
bridgehead, including an elite tank

1 VA-MA VN 10/209, p. 2-3. Documents from the archives of the Great Germany Division confirm that on July 31, 1943, it was part of the XXIII Army Corps and was assigned to the 51st Separate Tank Regiment (armed with T-U Panther tanks). Note: the list of weapons of this division is incomplete, mainly heavy and self-propelled are taken into account.

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The number of armored vehicles of the 20th TD (document from the military archive of Germany)

the grenadier (motorized) division "Great Germany", the 26th, 95th infantry divisions and other formations, allows us to conclude that it was during the Oryol operation "Kutuzov" that the fate of the battle on the Oryol-Kursk Bulge as a whole was decided and decided .

In total, in the Oryol strategic offensive operation, 34 infantry divisions opposed and participated in hostilities: 6, 7, 26, 31, 34, 45, 56,

72, 78 (assault), 86, 95, NO, 112, 129, 131, 134, 137, 183, 208, 211, 221, 216, 251, 253, 258, 262, 292, 293, 295, 296, 321, 339, 383 and 707th; 5 motorized - 10, 20, 25, 36th and Ve

63

vivacious Germany"; 8 tank divisions - 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, 12th, 18th and 20th; Did the 1st, 102nd, 105th, 108th and 201st security divisions provide protection for a vast area of upcoming hostilities?

In addition, separate groups and regiments participated in the battle for the Eagle. For example, the Manteuffel group included the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th and 14th anti-tank (Jäger) battalions. They were equipped with self-propelled artillery mounts of great power. The combat formations of the Wehrmacht troops were supported by the 21st tank brigade, which was armed with 45 T-1 ("tiger") tanks, as well as the 656th tank destroyer regiment with two self-propelled assault divisions (653rd and 654th), which were armed with 89 units (i.e., all self-propelled guns "Ferdinand" manufactured by this time), and many other separate units and subdivisions that had the latest weapons.

A complete picture of the strength and power of the German grouping on the Orlovsky bridgehead is given by the presence of mobile armored vehicles in it.

As we can see from the data in the table, never and nowhere, not until now, not after, neither in the Eastern nor in the Western theaters of operations, not a single German group had such powerful mobile, and therefore mobile, armored forces, besides concentrated on a very small bridgehead with an area of only 25,000 sq. KM.

All the offensive power that the German army was able to muster was initially directed to the implementation of Operation Citadel. Indeed, the German command concentrated on Orlovsky, as well as on

1 In separate publications, especially domestic ones, this division is mentioned as a tank division - SS "Grossdeutschland". She never was. In 1942, Hitler signed an order to transfer it to the organizational structure that the SS division "Adolf Hitler" had. Source: Müller-Hillebrand B. German Land Army 1933-1945 - M.: Izographus, Eksmo Publishing House, 2002. Pp. 766.

2 The selection was made by the author from various sources stored in the German Federal Military Archive (Freiburg): VA-MA VU 6/u 574; VN?21-2\ 444, 494a, 7965; VN 20-9/135, VN 20-9/339; Müller-Hillebrand B. Land Army of Germany 15 vols. - M.: Izographus, Publishing house "Ex mo", 2002. Pp. 789-790.

Note: data on the grouping of Wehrmacht troops are presented as of July 25, 1943.

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The composition, armament and losses of the 653rd separate battalion of self-propelled guns "ferdiand" (document from the military archive of Germany)

Belgorod-Kharkov bridgeheads, everything that the industry of Germany and "mobilized Europe" was capable of. Hitler threw almost all of his reserves into this battle. The Germans began to pull formations and units from other sectors of the Soviet-German front and from the operational depth. Beginning on July 12, the epicenter of the gigantic battle that raged on both sides of Kursk began to shift north of it and, bursting into a fiery tornado of an unprecedented scale, began to rage around Orel. At the beginning of the second decade of July 1943, the German command concentrated huge forces on the Orlovsky parade ground. In fact, 36 out of 148 infantry! or 25%; 5 out of 7 motorized?,

Tb, 7, 14, 26, Z1, 34, 45, 56, 72, 78, 86, 95, 110, 112, 129, 131, 134, 137, 183, 208, 211, 216, 251, 253, 258, 262, 292, 293, 295, 296, 299, 321, 339, 383, 707 and 721st Infantry Divisions.

210. 20th, 36th and 25th motorized divisions and motorized division "Grossdeutschland".

65

or 72%; 8 out of 20 tank divisions!', or 40%, located on the Soviet-German front.

In addition, the Oryol grouping of the enemy was unusually saturated with separate tank regiments, as well as mobile assault and anti-tank divisions, which had not previously been used in battles on the Eastern Front. These are two heavy tank formations of 45 tanks of the T-U and T-U12 types; 656th heavy anti-tank regiment³; three anti-tank battalions for special purposes⁴; 10 separate divisions of assault guns⁵.

The forces of the Luftwaffe were represented by the 6th Air Fleet of Colonel General Robert Ritter von Greim and at that time consisted of 1110 aircraft, including 350 fighters, 560 day bombers and attack aircraft, as well as 200 reconnaissance aircraft.

The German command (as well as ours) was faced with the task: in the remaining time (from March to July 1943) to understaff, rearm, and partly rearm their formations, badly battered in the bloody winter battles. As a result of the colossal work of the logistics services and German industry, the Germans managed to increase the strength of most divisions to 12,000-15,000 officers and men. Partially re-equip them with the latest weapons, and also create new mobile assault and anti-tank units, most of which were sent to the Orlovsky bridgehead.

- 2.4, 5, 8, 9, 12.18 and 20th tank divisions - all from the Army Group Center.

2 51st separate tank regiment and 505th separate tank battle.

3 656th regiment of self-propelled guns, consisting of the 653rd and 654th separate battalions of 45 self-propelled guns "Ferdinand" in each. s 2nd, 25th and 561st mobile anti-tank divisions.

5 177th, 185th, 189th, 190th, 216th, 244th, 245th, 270th, 904th and 909th divisions of assault guns, each with 31 self-propelled guns.

E Müller-Hillebrand B. Land Army of Germany 1933-1945. - M.: Izographus, Eksmo Publishing House, 2002. Pp. 658, 665.

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When analyzing the forces of the parties, it becomes obvious, contrary to the prevailing opinion, that the German grouping of troops on the Orlovsky bridgehead was much more powerful than the grouping of the Belgorod-Kharkov bridgehead - a huge

advantage in infantry, self-propelled artillery systems (assault guns), anti-tank and heavy artillery. There were fewer tanks. Subsequently, after the failure of the offensive operation "Citadel", these weapons, almost all of which remained intact, will play a primary role in defensive battles and inflict heavy losses on the advancing troops of the Western, Bryansk and Central Fronts.

As you know, in order to implement the plan of operation "Cita del" in the southern sector of the Orlovsky bridgehead, the German command concentrated five tank and army corps. But only two of them - XXXXXX and XXXXXX tank ones - were tasked with breaking through the defenses of the troops at the junction of the 13th and 70th armies of the Central Front. The XXIII army corps was to move forward and cover the left flank. XXXXY] the tank corps was supposed to cover the right flank of the main attacking forces. The army had one more at its disposal, the XX Army Corps, whose divisions were on the defensive on the right flank of the army. He was not involved in the attack.

A thorough study of the documents of the Federal Military Archive of Germany, which confirm the complete composition of the German group at the Orlovsky bridgehead in July 1943, and their analysis give grounds to draw the following CONCLUSIONS.

1. The time has come to revise the data on the number of German troops that took part in the Battle of Oryol. On the pages of various kinds of literature it is stated that on July 10 it was about 600 thousand people (taking into account the troops of the left wing of the 2nd field army). As a rule, these data are given at the beginning of the German offensive operation (July 1). However, there is not a single reference to any document from the German archives or the work of foreign scientists confirming this figure. And if you consider

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Samples of German military equipment

If the number of German troops on July 25 is given, then it is clearly underestimated. Only the composition of 52 infantry, tank and motorized divisions, with their minimum average strength of 12,500, confirms that the grouping numbered 650,000 people. In fact, as can be seen from the documents of the military archive, the number of most divisions far exceeded this figure.

Reporting documents testify that a large number of separate enemy infantry, tank, self-propelled artillery, artillery, sapper and engineering regiments, divisions and battalions of the enemy took part in the hostilities. They were not part of the divisions listed above, but were directly subordinate to the commanders of armies or corps commanders. Thus, the composition of the 6596th separate tank regiment and the 21st separate tank brigade was within the strength of the tank division. The Manteuffel Group is another infantry division, and so on. (See in detail: "Battle of Orlov - two years: facts, statistics, analysis." Book Two, Appendix No. 1, Table No. 1, p. 717).

It seems to me that, taking into account all the units and subdivisions, the strength of the Oryol grouping of the enemy, which took part in the hostilities in July 1943, was about 800 thousand people. It more than doubled the size of the Belgorod-Kharkov grouping of the enemy (including special units, it numbered about 400 thousand).

Thus, the German group that took part in the defensive battles on the Orlovsky bridgehead was the largest in the history of World War II and accounted for 25 percent, or a quarter of all troops located at that time on the Eastern Front.

According to the German researcher of the Second World War, Müller-Hillebrand, on July 7, 1943, the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front had 186.5 divisions in the ground, air force and SS troops. So the troops are here

! Müller-Gillebrand B. Land Army of Germany 1933-1945. - M.: Izographus, Eksmo Publishing House, 2002. Pp. 399.

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(with an average German division of 15 thousand people) and taking into account special units and subunits, for example, individual tank regiments and assault divisions of self-propelled guns, there were at best 3.2 million people.

2. The Oryol grouping of the enemy was unusually

saturated with powerful stationary, mobile, assault and anti-tank artillery, as well as tanks and aircraft. There is a large number of engineering and construction units. It was in the Battle of Orel that the latest weapons were used: Ferdinands, armored cars, Goliath tanks, Faustpatrons, 400-mm Varyunga rocket launchers, etc.

An analysis of the forces and means of the enemy who took part in the conduct of hostilities at the Orlovsky bridgehead shows that in the summer of 1943, a turning point occurred on the Eastern Front, as in the war as a whole. Now the decisive role in conducting operations and achieving results in them was played not by the number of infantry, but by the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of weapons: artillery (primarily self-propelled), tanks and aircraft.

3. The Orlov grouping of the enemy was notable for its mobility. The tactical organization was simple and could change rapidly in accordance with changes in the main lines of action. The whole system ("ayn hayt") was divided into groups (blocks). One unitary component block could easily be added to another (infantry, artillery, aviation, engineering and construction, sapper). The subunits, weakened by heavy losses, quickly grouped into designated forces ("Kampfgruppen") for defensive or offensive operations on a certain sector of the front. Therefore, when studying individual front-line operations, it is quite difficult to trace the composition and structure of the German troops participating in it.

4. It should be noted that at the Orlovsky bridgehead the German grouping was represented by the elite divisions of the so-called "first wave": tank divisions - 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12,

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18, 20th; infantry - 6, 7, Z1 and 78th assault; 36th Motorized called.

The exceptions were 4 Hungarian security divisions and 14 battalions of Kaminsky's people's militia. Kaminsky's battalions were part of the infantry divisions and were subordinate to their commanders.

The leadership of the XX and XXIII infantry, XXXXX and XXXXX tank corps, infantry and tank divisions of the 9th Army, together with the commander, General Walter Model, went through the harsh school of defensive battles of the Battle of Rzhev. Separate units and formations of the KhZhU and XXXXHUP tank corps took part in the Battle of Stalingrad.

5. When studying documents from the German military archive, which reflect the social composition of the German units and formations, you note that the German divisions, individual units and subunits were ethnically the same

native and 95 percent consisted of Germans or Austrians. The remaining 5 percent were represented by the Czechs, but the Poles, the French, and the Finns.

Each German division, as a rule, was formed from the water of the provinces (Earth) or in a large city, replenishment came from the same place. This had a positive effect on the state of the moral and spiritual climate of the entire division. In addition, traditions, symbols, awards, which were of great importance in the Wehrmacht, contributed to an increase in the combat effectiveness of divisions.

Most of the formations and units of the combined group of troops of the 2nd Panzer and 9th Armies before that for 21 months (from October 1941 to June 1943) continuously fought in offensive, and then in defensive operations on the territory of Rzhevsky (9th Army) and Orlovsky bridgeheads. Thus, by the time of the decisive battle for the Orlovsky bastion, the enemy grouping had a qualified command staff that possessed

. Commander of the Russian Liberation People's Army (RONA), which operated on the territory of the Brasovsky district of the Oryol region, now Bryansk (Lokot anti-Soviet republic).

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rich experience of warfare, and most importantly, of a defensive nature.

So, on one tenth of the Eastern Front - 400 km (on July 5, 1943, the area of the Orlovsky bridgehead was 25,000 sq. km) - there were 800 thousand people, or almost a quarter of all Wehrmacht troops (3.2 million people) of the Eastern Front - from the Barents to the Black Sea (about 4 thousand km). In July 1943, the Oryol grouping of the enemy was not only the largest in the Second World War, but also highly professional, was homogeneous in terms of national composition, with a stable moral and psychological climate and established traditions.

It should be noted that the saturation of the latest means of warfare in the Oryol operation (aircraft, tanks, guns and mortars, including multi-barreled Katyushas and Vanyushas) was several times higher than in the Moscow and Stalingrad operations. .

The underestimation of the enemy forces at the Orlovsky bridgehead led to the fact that the operation lasted much longer than planned. Instead of four days, it lasted thirty-seven. In order to comply with the directive of the Supreme High Command. to defeat the "Enemy's Oryol grouping with the aim of capturing the city of Orel", our troops needed incredible efforts. After the start of Operation Kutuzov, the Soviet command additionally introduced the 2nd and 3rd tank and 11th armies, the 25th tank and 2nd guards. cavalry corps.

And the German command, in order to hold the city of Orla, in turn, transferred reserves. The enemy grouping operating on the Orlovsky bridgehead was in the shortest possible time reinforced by two armored (5th and 8th), two motorized (Grossdeutschland and 20th) and six infantry divisions (26, 183, 95, 253, 258, 129th).

The real balance of power before the start of the Battle of Oryol was not 1:2, as noted in most books on the sacred battle of Kursk, but 1:1.75 in our favor.

An unprecedented concentration of troops of the opposing sides only at the final stage of the battle for Orlov

1 TsAMORF, f. 148a, op. 3763, d. 143, l. 50.

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The bridgehead in the summer of 1943 - more than 150 rifle (infantry) and tank corps (divisions) - as well as the strategic importance of the central sector of the Soviet-German front determined the uncompromising nature of the hostilities, resulting in huge human losses.

RELATION OF FORCES OF THE SIDES ON AND JULY 1943

As a result of the regrouping and concentration of forces carried out in accordance with the concept and plan of the operation, Soviet troops in the sector of the left wing of the Western Front and on the entire Bryansk Front outnumbered the opposing enemy forces: in infantry - in Zraza, in mortars - almost 3.5 times, in field artillery - by 4.6 times, in anti-tank artillery guns - by 2.5 times (in the total number of artillery barrels and mortars, including medium and large calibers - by almost 4 times), in tanks - by almost 2, 5 times, in airplanes - about 3 times.

The troops of the Central Front did not have such a clear advantage over the enemy troops. They participated in repelling a powerful blow from the Nazis, who acted according to the plan of Operation Citadel. Nevertheless, the front commander Rokossovsky was given the task of launching a counteroffensive on July 15 after a slight regrouping of forces.

The actions of the troops of the Western, Bryansk and Central Fronts were supported by 3023 aircraft of the 1.15th and 16th air armies. In addition, up to 300 long-range aircraft were involved in order to increase the strike power of the troops of all three fronts.

Enemy aviation as part of the Ost group was based at airfields located in the Vitebsk region, Do-

Rogobuzh, Orel, Pochep, Bobruisk. The enemy had over a thousand combat aircraft that could be used in the Oryol direction.

b Battle of Kursk. Edited by I.V. Parotkin. - M.: Nauka, 1970. Pp. 496.

? There.

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Thus, in the areas designated for breaking through the enemy's defenses, the balance of forces was in our favor. In these narrow areas of breakthroughs, our command concentrated four powerful groupings, which, with a small superiority in forces and means on the entire front, ensured overwhelming superiority in the directions of the main attacks. Strong army and front reserves, concentrated behind the divisions of the first echelon of strike groupings, were a powerful means of developing a breakthrough and turning tactical success into operational success.

RELATION OF FORCES BY THE BEGINNING OF THE ORLOV OPERATION!

T | G

Soviet troops | Troops vs. Personnel | Western,
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Mortar guns | — 21000 7000 Tanks and self-
propelled guns (assault | 22400 12000 | guns)
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"The data on the correlation of forces testify that our command has created an overwhelming superiority over the enemy in terms of forces and means in the directions of the main attacks. Such superiority fully ensured the success of breaking through the enemy defenses and its development in depth, as well as the fulfillment of the task of eliminating the Oryol grouping of German troops - the task set by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command for the troops of the left wing of the Western, Bryansk and Central fronts "?.

1 Battle of Kursk. Edited by I.V. Parotkin. - M.: Nauka, 1970. Pp. 486.

? Battle of Kursk. In 2 books. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1947. Book 2. Pp. 32.

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TROOPS READY FOR THE BATTLE FOR THE EAGLE

According to the composition of the troops and the location of the reserves created in accordance with the concept and plan of the operation, it is clear that the Soviet command prepared four strike groups to break through the German defense and defeat the enemy's Oryol grouping - one on the left wing of the Western Front, the other - as part of the 13th and the 70th Army in the zone of the Central Front and two in the zone of the Bryansk Front.

The first and most powerful grouping was concentrated on the left wing of the 11th Guards Army, where six rifle divisions, three tank brigades and two tank regiments of the breakthrough were in the first line on a 14-kilometer front. Behind them, in the second echelon of the army, there were four rifle divisions and one tank brigade, and in the reserve - two tank corps and one rifle division.

On July 13, on the second day after the start of Operation Kutu Call, the 50th Army received an order: part of the forces of its left flank to advance on Zikeevo in order to cut off the Germans' retreat to the west and cover the right flank of the 11th Guards Army from possible enemy counterattacks from the west.

The 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps was concentrated in the reserve of the Supreme Command Headquarters in the western direction. The 11th Army, consisting of eight rifle divisions and three tank regiments, the 4th Tank Army, consisting of one mechanized and two tank corps, were in the formation stage, and an additional corps, the 25th Tank, was transferred here. All these formations were not previously intended for combat operations in the offensive zone of the left wing of the Western Front. Most likely, the Supreme Command

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provided for their use in the Smolensk direction

research institutes

The second strike force, less strong than the previous one, was prepared in the zone of the defense sector of the 61st Army, on its left flank. Here, on a 10-kilometer front in the first line, there were three rifle divisions and one tank brigade; in the second echelon, three rifle divisions (minus one regiment of the 336th rifle division) and one penetration tank regiment. In the reserve of the front

In this direction, there was the 20th Tank Corps, which was transferred to the 61st Army by the beginning of the operation.

These two strike groups, concentrated fairly close to each other in the northwestern section of the Oryol Bulge, had one common task: to cut off and cut off the enemy grouping of the northern base of the Oryol bridgehead with a strike from north to south and, in a good combination of circumstances (and this successful offensive operations of the troops of the Central Front, which were tasked with breaking through the defenses at the southern base of the bridgehead and, advancing from south to north, moving towards the troops of the Bagranyan shock group) to close the entire Oryol grouping of the enemy into a kol. At the same time, another joint task facing the northwestern shock group of troops was being carried out: to surround and destroy the enemy's Bolkhov grouping.

The third shock - dissecting grouping was concentrated on the sector of the adjacent flanks of the 3rd (left) and 63rd (right) armies. Here, on the 18-kilometer front in the first line, there were five rifle divisions and six tank regiments of the breakthrough; in the second echelon - four rifle divisions (without one regiment) and two tank regiments. In the reserve of the Bryansk Front in this direction were the 25th Rifle and 1st Guards Tank Corps. The latter was subordinated to the commander of the 63rd Army, but just before the start of the operation, he was transferred to General Gorbатов to enter the breakthrough in the offensive zone of the 3rd Army.

In the depths of the left wing of the Bryansk Front, in the area of Plavsk, was in the final stage of reformation

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SYMBOLS

X KUTRU 12.07.43 Y. {- KISHHODU 18.07.43 Y. {- KISHHODU
12.07.43 Y. X << - KISHHODU19.0T.AZG.

3- TO THE OUTCOME 07/16/43

The fighting of the 3rd and 63rd armies in the Oryol direction from July 12 to 19, 1943

3rd Tank (Guards) Army Lieutenant General P.S. Rybalko as part of one mechanized and two tank corps. This army, also previously not intended for combat operations, due to the unsuccessful start of the Oryol operation, was introduced on July 19 in the eastern sector of the Oryol arc with the aim of breaking through the second line of enemy defenses on the Oleshnya River.

According to the planned strikes, artillery weapons were also distributed. In each of the three directions, our command concentrated one breakthrough artillery corps. The shock groupings were reinforced by separate tank self-propelled artillery, artillery and mortar units, which were part of the armies, fronts and the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command.

The fourth largest strike force, consisting of the 48th 13th and 70th armies of the Central Front, with the support of two tank corps (9th and 19th), the 2nd tank and 16th air armies, was supposed to strike on July 15 on enemy troops and after breaking through the enemy's defenses, advance in the general direction to Kromy and further to the northwest in order to surround the Oryol grouping of Germans from the south and southwest and assist the troops of the Bryansk and left wing of the Western fronts in its destruction.

As you can see, attacks on enemy troops were delivered in the northern, northwestern, eastern and southern sections of the Oryol Bulge and should have led to the encirclement of the enemy grouping, its fragmentation and destruction along parts.

On July 12, the troops of the Bryansk and left wing of the Western Fronts, and on July 15, the troops of the right wing of the Central Front went on the offensive with the aim of eliminating the enemy's Orel strategic bridgehead and defeating the German grouping defending it.

At the present time, after a thorough study of primarily archival documentation, as well as the entire block of publications reflecting or in one way or another affecting the Oryol strategic offensive operation, the author came to the conclusion that the entire complex of military operations of the troops

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The Red Army's liquidation of the enemy's Orlovsky bridgehead must be regarded as four separate front-line operations, closely interconnected and united by a common task - the final liberation of the bridgehead.

1. Khotynets operation! (July 12 - August 17, 1943), which included the military operations of the troops of the left wing of the Western Front in the Khotynets direction, the redeployment of the troops of the 4th tank army from the Bolkhovsky to the Khotynets direction, major battles that ended with the liberation of the Orlovsky Polissya and the city of Khotynets (August 10); the entry of the operational group of General Kryukov in the Karachev direction, the battles for the city of Karachev, its liberation on August 17 and the withdrawal of troops to the approaches to Bryansk.

2. The Bolkhov operation (July 12-30), which included breaking through the enemy defenses by the troops of the 11th Guards and 61st armies, bringing the 11th and 4th tank armies into battle with the goal of

development of success in the depths of the defense, the coverage and defeat of the Bolkhov group of Germans, the liberation of the city of Bolkhov (July 29).

3. Oryol-Mtsensk operation (July 12 - August 5), carried out by the troops of the 3rd and 63rd armies of the Bryansk Front with the assistance of the troops of the 61st Army and the 48th Army of the Central Front and culminating in the liberation of the cities of Mtsensk (July 20) and Orel (August 5).

4. The Kromsko-Dmitrovskaya operation (July 15 - August 12), carried out by the troops of the 13th, 70th, 65th and 2nd tank armies of the Central Front, ended with the liberation of Krom (August 6) and Dmitrovsk-Orlovsky (August 12).

In the development of the Orel strategic offensive operation, after a short operational pause, the troops of the Bryansk Front carried out the Bryansk offensive operation (September 1 - October 3, 1943), which ended with the liberation of not only Bryansk (September 17), but the entire Oryol bridgehead, the contours of which almost coincided

1 In some publications, it is referred to as the Khotynets-Karachevskaya offensive operation.

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with the territory of the Oryol region within its administrative boundaries of 1943.

When considering issues related to the study of front-line operations that make up the Oryol strategic operation as a whole, it should be noted that the hostilities at the Oryol bridgehead were carried out simultaneously throughout its territory, and therefore the front commanders, performing the tasks of the Supreme Command Headquarters, closely cooperated with each other. They solved complex issues that constantly arose during frontline operations.

It should be noted that most of the battles for the Orlovsky bridgehead took place to the north and northwest of Orel - on the territory of the Orlovsky Polissya. The success of the military operations of the Soviet troops in the Khotynets-Bolkhov direction determined and determined the outcome of the entire Oryol strategic offensive operation as a whole.

But this does not mean that the battles that took place south of the Orel were less intense than to the north or east of it. This is what distinguishes the Battle of Oryol from all the previous ones and many that followed it, that starting from July 15, 1943, battles unprecedented in their fierceness in a narrowly limited space, using the latest models of military equipment, took place simultaneously along the entire perimeter of the Oryol Bulge and then on the entire bridgehead area.

Practically from July 15 to August 3, major hostilities in almost all other sectors of the Soviet-German front ceased, with the exception of hostilities conducted by the troops of the Southern Front (Mius operation). The whole world, through newspapers and radio messages, followed the course of the Battle of Oryol. Of course, each of the opposing sides sought to achieve a result in its favor. The success of other offensive operations of the Soviet troops (Belgorod-Kharkov, Smolensk, etc.) planned by the General Staff of the Red Army, but not yet put into action, depended on the successful completion of the defeat of the German troops on the Orlovsky bridgehead.

The fighting took place on the territory

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narrowed from the north by the line Kirov - Belev - Zhizdra, from the west - by the border of the rivers Bolva and Desna, from the east - by the arc of Mtsensk, Novosil, Maloarkhangelsk and from the south - by the border of Maloarkhangelsk, Ponyri, Kromy. The total area of this territory reached 25 thousand square meters. km.

FORMATION OF COMPOUNDS OF THE BADANOV IMPACT GROUP

It is known that the 5th and 25th tank corps took part in the battle of Borilov along with the 4th tank army. By the start of Operation Kutuzov (July 12), these corps were fully staffed and armed according to the staff list. Being part of the Western Front for a long time, which almost continuously carried out offensive operations in one place or another, the command and rank and file of these corps gained vast experience in fighting in a variety of operational situations.

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5th Tank Corps of Lieutenant General M.G. Sakhno, after tough hostilities in the Khotynets direction, which he had been conducting since July 12, was withdrawn on July 20 to the front reserve for replenishment.

During this time, the corps lost 2135 people, which is 30 percent of the original composition (7621 people). The main losses fell on the four main combat formations of the corps: three tank brigades (24th, 41st and 70th) - 829 people, of which 221 were killed, 19 were missing, and 589 were wounded. The 5th motorized rifle brigade lost 877 men, or 33 per cent of its original strength (2,472 men).'

Losses in tanks during this time amounted to 53 percent. Thus, 65 T-34 tanks, 12 MK-3 tanks, and 18 T-70 tanks were lost (documents do not indicate the degree of damage). The initial composition was, respectively, 131, 25 and 23 tanks.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3404, op. 1, d. 164, l. 1, 13; d. 68, l. 47-228. 2 Ibid.

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And yet, the strength and combat composition of the 5th Tank Corps on 25.07.43 was still impressive. The 41st Tank Brigade alone had 928 fighters and commanders, 46 T-34 tanks, 10 MK-3 tanks and 14 T-70 light tanks, a total of 70 vehicles! Combat strength of the 70th tank brigade on July 26: tanks M4-A-2-29, MK-3-19, T-34-5, total - 53 tanks? As of July 23, the 24th Tank Corps, after intense fighting, consisted of: 10 T-34.8 - K-80 tanks (so in the document. - E Shch.) lb - T-70 - a total of 24 tanks (excluding replenishment) and personnel - 512 people.

In total, the 5th Tank Corps had 147 tanks on July 25, of which 61 were T-34 tanks.

25th Tank Corps Major General F.G. Anikushin on April 1, 1943, was withdrawn from the Western Front and sent to be formed in military tank camps near the city of Tula, where he was staffed and replenished with materiel. For two months, on the basis of rich combat experience and already established traditions, the education and training of soldiers and the cohesion of units and subunits were carried out. The corps carried out its further combat training and staffing already in the front line in the area of the city of Mosalsk.

Headquarters Directive No. 30146 dated July 14, 1943, signed by Stalin and Antonov and sent to the command of the Western Front at 15:25, "allowed the use of the 25th Tank Corps on the left flank of the front to build on the success of the 11th Guards. aermia "".

On July 14, 1943, at 20:00, the corps was alerted and given the task of making a 140-kilometer march and concentrating in the area of the Minin-Popov settlement in readiness for an attack on Khotynets.

On July 18, the 25th Tank Corps, which replaced Sakhno's 5th Corps, began active hostilities, but even in six days of intense fighting, it suffered significant losses in strength.

1 Ibid., f. 41 brigade, op. 1, d. 12, l. 364.

2 Ibid., f. 70 brigade, op. 1, d. 1, l. 39.

3 Ibid., f. 24 brigade, op. 1, d.8, l. 73-74. 4 Ibid., f. 148a, op. 3763, d. 143, l. 169.

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dyakh and tanks. For example, in the 162nd tank brigade, by the end of July 23, 24 serviceable tanks remained, of which 21 were T-34s, 3 were T-70s; motorized infantry 60 percent, or 350 men; a mortar company and a brigade anti-tank battery remained in full force.

FORMATION OF CONNECTIONS OF THE 4TH TANK ARMY

30th Ural Volunteer Tank Corps (hereinafter referred to as the 30th UDTK or 30th shopping mall). The office of the commander of the armor of the tank and mechanized troops of the Red Army, the commander of the 30th UDTK, was approved by the lieutenant general of the tank troops G.S. Rodin, deputy commander for political affairs, head of the political department - Colonel V.M. Shalunov, chief of staff - Colonel B.R. Ereemev.

It is known that one of the sources of replenishment of the ranks of the Red Army were volunteer formations. True, starting from 1942, there are fewer of them than in 1941. So, at the end of 1942, the collective farmers of the Pobeda agricultural artel in the Lebyazhye district of the Chelyabinsk region organized a fundraiser for the construction of a tank column and appealed to the working people of the region to follow their example. In response, only the staff of the Kirov Tank Plant in Chelyabinsk contributed four and a half million rubles, and in total about one hundred million rubles were received.

Having supported the initiative of the peasants and workers of the Chelyabinsk region, the collectives of a number of other factories in the Urals decided to create a tank corps, the personnel of units and subunits of which would be formed only on a voluntary basis. Therefore, it received the name - the Ural Volunteer Tank Corps. The news of its formation spread throughout the Urals.

On the morning of February 28, 1943 at the entrance to the machine shop

1 TsAMORF, f. 3419, he. 1, d. 23, l. 2--3.

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The Nizhny Tagil Tank Building Plant posted an announcement:

"At the initiative of the workers of the Urals, the Ural Volunteer Tank Corps is being created.

Applications are accepted by the secretaries of the party organizations."

One of the first to bring a statement was Yevgeny Trofimovich Yashchuk, who arrived at the plant after being seriously wounded at the front: "Please enlist me in the ranks of volunteer tankers, I must pay the Nazis for their atrocities that they inflict on our people. I will go to fight so that you will be freed from the fascist slavery of the Soviet people.

The best machine operators of the plant, comrades in the workshop Levchenko, Raevich, Guderin and Abramov, applied.

- We want to beat the enemy together in one tank crew, -
they said.

In the first day alone, 4363 applications were submitted at this plant. All in all, at the enterprises of Nizhny Tagil, workers and engineers wrote ten and a half thousand applications with a request to enroll them in the corps. This was enough to form one tank corps. In general, 110 thousand applications were received in the Urals. It is estimated that on average there were 12 candidates per seat. The age of those wishing to fight at the front did not exceed forty

years.

Party and Soviet organizations, heads of enterprises and military registration and enlistment offices had to work hard in the selection of volunteers. The reasons for refusing to enroll were good. But those wishing to get to the front did not always reckon with them. Thus, 16-year-old Vanya Kondaurov came to the Military Commissariat of Perm with an urgent request to enroll him as a volunteer. He was refused. But the young patriot decided in his own way: having learned the route of the Nerma brigade, he went to the Glazovo station, where he jumped into one of the train cars. The fellow countrymen treated Vanya sympathetically and left him with them. Upon arrival at the front, Kondaurov was assigned to one of the crews as a radio operator. Soon the young warrior showed remarkable fighting qualities.

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and became a tank driver. For courage, courage and high military skill shown during the crossing of the Oder River, Senior Sergeant Ivan Aleksandrovich Kondaurov was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. He fought from the banks of the Negr River to the Oder River, and for his heroism and courage he was awarded the Order of the Patriotic War of the 1st and 2nd degree, the Order of Glory of the 3rd degree. Subsequently, he became a doctor of historical sciences.

The 197th tank brigade was formed in Sverdlovsk (commander - Colonel Ya.I. Trotsenko, deputy commander for political affairs, head of the political department - lieutenant colonel E.I. Skop), in the city of Kungur of the Perm region - the 243rd tank brigade (commander - Lieutenant Colonel V. I. Pri Khodko, Deputy Commander for Political Affairs, Head of the Literary Department - Major E. M. Elufieriev), in Chelyabinsk - 244th Tank Brigade (commander - Lieutenant Colonel M. G. Fomichev! Deputy Commander for Political Affairs, head of the political department

lieutenant colonel M.A. Bogomolov), at the Degtyarka station of the Sverdlovsk region - the 30th motorized rifle brigade (commander - Colonel M.S. Smirnov, deputy commander for political unit, head of the political department - Major A.P. Glukhov).

The corps, in addition to brigades, included: 1621st self-propelled artillery, 1513th anti-tank artillery, 219th anti-aircraft artillery, 299th mortar regiments, 742nd anti-tank battalion, 390th communications battalion, 743rd separate sapper and 88th separate motorcycle battalions.

In the first half of March 1943, the corps was fully manned. On March 11, the People's Commissariat of Defense named it the 30th Ural Volunteer Tank Corps.

In the tank brigades, there were up to 67 percent of communists and Komsomol members, and in general there were more than 50 percent of them in the corps?

! Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, graduate of the Oryol Armored School. Frunze.

2 Rodin G.S. In the footsteps of the past. - Tula: Priokskoye book publishing house, 1968. Pp. 169-170.

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All military equipment for it was manufactured at the Ural factories with funds contributed by the population. By the end of April, the tankers were fully equipped with uniforms and weapons. In the historical form of the corps there is a laconic entry that "everything, from a button on a tunic to heavy tanks, the working people of the Urals purchased with their personal savings and funds earned during off-duty and extracurricular hours".

Due to the fact that the soldiers had not previously served in the Red Army, and junior commanders served in various types of troops and in different periods, there was an urgent need for their comprehensive training.

On April 1, when most of the personnel arrived in the corps, systematic training began. At the same time, many organizational issues were resolved: the uniform of personnel, the arrangement and equipment of areas for the location of formations and units.

In the period from April 1 to April 15, training took place without materiel and weapons. There were also no other visual aids for training personnel.

In the period from April 15 to April 20, formations and units received weapons, service equipment and partly materiel.

part.

On May 1, 1943, tank soldiers took the oath in a solemn ceremony. Parades and rallies were held in regional centers and in a number of large cities where units and divisions of the corps were trained, attended by representatives of the Ural Military District, command staff of the tank corps and brigades, secretaries of regional party committees, chairmen of regional and district Soviets. comrades, heads of large enterprises, etc.

For example, in Chelyabinsk, several thousand workers came to the rally. On behalf of the wives and mothers of the volunteers, Olga Nikolaevna Kostelyanskaya spoke at it, whose son was standing in the square in the line of soldiers who had just vowed to mercilessly beat the enemy.

1 Rodin G.S. In the footsteps of the past. - Tula: Priokskoye book publishing house, 1968. Pp. 175.

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"It is not easy for a mother to part with her son," said O.N. Kostelyanskaya. - Many feelings are possessed by the mother when she sends him to the front. But today, all the Soviet people, all the women of our great country live only for one thing - to defeat the hated enemy, to punish fascism for all its atrocities. And I say: "Go, my son, into battle. Destroy the sworn enemy with formidable Ural weapons and all the power of anger. May your heart be brave! May your hand be firm! Let there be a well-aimed shot! May your fetters be victorious!

From April 20 to June 1, training proceeded more systematically, but the scattered formations and units of the corps in the three regions of the Urals also made it difficult to organize and control combat training, despite the fact that both the commander and the headquarters of the corps constantly traveled to formations and units to organize training. and control over it.

The commanding staff and headquarters of the corps formations were faced with the task of preparing a single specialist fighter. At first they studied at the place of formation and staffing - in the Ural cities.

Until June 1, the personnel underwent the following types of training under the accelerated program:

- a) solo training;
- 6) knocking together the crew, squad, calculation;
- c) putting together a platoon;
- d) some formations and parts have begun to knock out mouths.

On June 10, after moving by rail near Moscow, formations and units began their studies at the Kubinka tank camp. The study was conducted 12 hours a day. Until June 15, tank companies were formed. During the period of combat training, the units continued to be replenished with weapons and personnel, and by July 20, 1943, the corps was completely

plectovan.

A feature of the cohesion of parts of the Ural tankers is the fact that the vast majority of the personnel who arrived to staff the unit

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rodin G.S. In the footsteps of the past. - Tula: Priokskoe book publishing house, 1968. Pp. 179.

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corps, in the past did not undergo military training, and this required considerable time for a single training '.

Throughout the study, the issues of recruitment and formation were resolved. Already in the last days before leaving for the front, an anti-aircraft regiment and an anti-tank battalion joined the corps.

By the end of the training, it was planned to conduct two exercises as part of the brigades, but in connection with an emergency call to the front, only one was held - in parts of the 197th and 244th tank brigades.

11th Tank Corps (hereinafter referred to as the 11th Tank Corps). Commander - Major General of Tank Troops N.N. Radkevich, Deputy commander of the early political unit, head of the political department - Colonel E.S. Usachev, chief of staff - Colonel D.M. Gritsenko.

The main parts of the corps: 20th Tank Brigade (commander - Colonel N.P. Konstantinov, deputy commander for political affairs, head of the political department - Colonel G.R. Chernov), 36th Tank Brigade (commander - Lieutenant Colonel I.A. Zharikov, deputy commander for political affairs, head of the political department - lieutenant colonel E.P. Slobodyanyuk), 65th tank brigade (commander - lieutenant colonel A.I. Shevchenko, deputy commander for political affairs, head of the political department - lieutenant colonel B.I. Pilikin), 12th motorized rifle brigade (commander - lieutenant colonel E.I. Zharov, deputy commander for political affairs, head of the political department - lieutenant colonel V.I. Sazonov).

The management officers of this corps, in contrast to the Urals, had significant combat experience by the time the army was formed. It was formed on June 1, 1942 in the city of Gorky, and immediately began its transfer to the Bryansk Front. Having completed the concentration by June 4, 1942 in the area of Ilyinka, Stegalovka, Streletskoye, the corps became part of the 5th tank army.

From 7 to 18 July 1942, the 11th Tank Corps fought heavy offensive battles in the direction of Khrushhevo, Ilyinka, Chibisovka. Having suffered heavy losses from enemy artillery and aircraft, he was withdrawn to the reserve of the Bryansk front.

1 TSAMORCH, f. 323, op. 4756, d.4, l.4.

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that. From August 12 to 18, the corps with the 340th and 137th rifle divisions attached to it conducted offensive battles in the direction of Zemlyansk in order to pull back part of the enemy forces and facilitate the advance of the Red Army units in the Voronezh direction. After the fierce July-August battles, he was withdrawn to the area of the city of Efremov, where until January 1943 he was replenished with personnel and military equipment.

From February 13 to March 23, 1943, the corps as part of the 2nd Panzer Army of the Bryansk and then the Central Fronts fought in the southern sector of the Orlovsky bridgehead in order to free it from the enemy. Advancing in the direction of Fatezh, Fateevka, Dobrovody and bypassing the Nazi resistance center Dmitriev-Lgovsky from the south, the corps rushed to Sevsk and reached its eastern outskirts. The enemy put up stubborn resistance during intense street fighting, but still could not hold back the onslaught of Soviet tankers. On March 1, by 10 p.m., the German garrison of Sevsk was completely defeated. Parts of the corps captured 1300 enemy soldiers and officers.

Developing the offensive on Bryansk, the corps went behind enemy lines and on March 2 captured the regional center and the Suzemka railway station, and on March 3 - the city of Seredina Buda. Tankers advanced at a high pace. Sudden blows of the corps created panic in the enemy's battle formations, disrupted his communications and command and control (see in detail: Yegor Shchekotikhin. Battle of Oryol - two years: facts, statistics, analysis. - Orel, 2006. Book One. P. 413— 425).

After successful but bloody battles in the Sevsk direction in the spring of 1943, the 11th Tank Corps was sent for reorganization to the area of the city of Tula, being in the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command.

On June 13, 1943, by order of the NPO, the 53rd, 59th and 160th tank brigades were excluded from the corps, which were reorganized into the 53rd, 54th and 160th separate tank regiments. Its new composition included: the 65th tank brigade, the 26th separate reconnaissance battalion, the 153rd separate communications battalion,

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193rd medical platoon and 36th tank brigade without materiel.

On June 18, 1943, by order of the Office of the Commander of the Armored and Mechanized Forces, the 11th Tank Corps was transferred from Tula to Solnechnogorsk, where it included: , 243rd mp, 1507th iptap, and 738th iptad, 1388th zap joined the corps already at the front - July 25, 1943. The corps was equipped with combat materiel from 1 to 4 July.

Thus, only by the end of June the corps was fully staffed according to the wartime staff and actually had only 13-15 days for combat training (knocking together). The following topics were worked out: "Squad, platoon, company (battery), battalion (division) in offensive and defense". Particular attention was paid to the actions of subdivisions in the offensive. Live firing was carried out © by the exit of the materiel and the running-in of infantry tanks in the composition: platoon, company, battalion. Due to the lack of time, the brigades and the corps as a whole were not put together.

Artillery units entered the corps late and did not undergo normal training, which was sharply reflected in the period of concentration (march) and the entry of battles.

The 6th Guards Red Banner Mechanized Corps (hereinafter referred to as the 6th TV Mk or the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps) was formed on the basis of the directive of the Directorate of the Commander of the Armored Tank and Mechanized Forces of the Red Army No. 1127105 / SS dated 3.06.43. and directives of the General Staff of the Red Army No. 39188 / SS dated 17.06.43 on the basis of the 3rd Guards Motorized Rifle Division in the city of Krasnovodsk. Its formation was completed in Zagorsk. The staffing of the corps took place from July 23, 1943 (so in the document; probably June 23. - E.Sh.) to July 19, 1943, i.e. before leaving for the front. Personnel, materiel and armament for staffing the corps arrived in the following terms:

a) the personnel arrived from 3.07 to 20.07.43;

6) tanks - from June 26 to July 12, 1943;

' TsAMORF, f. 135, op. 5024, d. 4, l. 322.

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c) artillery armament - from 11 to 18.07.43;

d) motor transport - from 6 to 19.07.43; By the day the vehicles left for the front, the corps was not fully staffed.

The basis of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps was the staff of the 3rd Guards Motorized Rifle Division, which had solid combat experience. Formed in 1939 in the Urals, in Perm

oblast, she, being at that time the 82nd rifle division, participated in the defeat of the Japanese militarists in the region of the Khalkhin-Gol river.

The fighters, commanders and political workers of the division made themselves famous for their selfless courage in the battles of Peschanaya and during the assault on the heights of Remizov and Zelena. 1910 soldiers of the 82nd Infantry Division were awarded orders and medals, and the regiment commander, Major Nikolai Nikolaevich Zai Yulyev, and the squad leader, Pavel Elizarovich Ponomarev, were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. On the battle banners of the most distinguished units - the 601st Rifle and 82nd Artillery Regiments - were attached the Order of the Red Banner, received for military merit.

In the terrible days of the battle for their native capital in October 1941, the 82nd division (by that time it had become a motorized rifle division) was transferred from distant Mongolia to Moscow. Entering the battle directly from the march, the division (as part of the 5th Army) not only detained the Nazis advancing along the Mozhaiskoye and Minskskoye highways, but also threw them back by the first blow to 18 km.

In December 1941, when the Red Army launched a counteroffensive near Moscow, the division was in the forefront of the attackers and recaptured a number of large settlements from the enemy.

On March 18, 1942, for the heroism, courage and military skill shown by the personnel in the battle near Moscow, the 82nd motorized rifle division was transformed into the 3rd guards motorized rifle division. Later, for distinction in the battles near Moscow, she was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

In the autumn of 1942 and in the winter of 1942/43, the division participated

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in the liberation of the cities of Gzhatsk, Sychevka and Vyazma. On March 12, 1943, its units were the first to break into Vyazma, for which they were awarded the gratitude of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief.

The 6th Guards Mechanized Corps included: the 16th Guards Red Banner Mechanized Brigade (commanded by Colonel V.M. Artyemenko), formed on the basis of the 5th Guards Motor Rifle Regiment (3rd Guards Med); The 17th Guards Red Banner Mechanized Brigade (commander - Colonel N.E. Shcherbakov), formed on the basis of the 6th Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment (3rd Guards Medical), and the 49th Mechanized Brigade (commander - Lieutenant Colonel V. V. Jabot).

The 49th Mechanized Brigade was created in September 1942 in the city of Dzerzhinsk, Gorky Region, and was staffed with personal

ny composition mainly due to the sailors of the Pacific Fleet. On December 9, 1942, she entered the battle near Stalingrad. Acting as part of the 5th mechanized corps, the 49th mechanized brigade liberated the Surovikino station, the city of Chernyshkovsky from the Nazis, and led a successful attack on the Tatsinskaya station. 168 soldiers of the brigade received government awards.

In addition, the corps included: the 29th separate tank regiment (commander - Lieutenant Colonel D.F. Maslyaev), the 56th separate tank regiment (commander - Major N.Ya. Selivanchik) and the 51st Guards Light Artillery Regiment (commander - Lieutenant Colonel V.M. Lakhtin), formed on the basis of the 51st Guards Artillery Regiment (3rd Guards Medical). All these units also had considerable combat

experience.

The 29th separate tank regiment glorified its banner in battles with the enemy on the Kalinin and Northwestern fronts. The 56th separate tank regiment took part in the defeat of the Nazis on the North-Western Front, in the Demyansk area. The tankers of the regiment proudly went into battle in combat vehicles with the inscription "Kirovskiy Komsomolets" given to them by the workers of the Kirov region.

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An analysis of documents briefly reflecting the formation and manning of the 4th Tank Army (reinforced by two tank corps - the 5th 25th) confirms that there has never been such a powerful tank group in the Red Army.

All four brigades of the 30th UDTK and two brigades of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps (16th and 17th Guards MBRs) had not previously participated in combat operations.

The commanders and fighters of the 49th Guards had a lot of combat experience. mbr, 29th and 56th detachment of the 6th guards mechanized corps.

In the 1st Tank Corps, all the tank brigades that had been part of it from the very beginning were withdrawn at the time of formation and (it is not clear why) transferred to the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. Only the 12th MBR remained unchanged, which fought for more than a year, first in the 5th Tank Army of General Lizyukov in the Voronezh direction, and then, in the winter of 1943, in the 11th Tank Corps near the city of Sevs.

The formation of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps continued until it was sent to the front, and there was practically no time to put together the headquarters of the brigade, the headquarters of the corps and the unit as a whole. His command was engaged in combat training of far from completed personnel, mainly resolving issues of putting together equipment

page, squad, platoon, company and part of the battalion!.

Thus, the 4th Panzer Army actually started the formation on July 4, having basically completed it already on July 16, 1943. By this time, the formation of the corps was completed, with the exception of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps.

The tense situation that developed on the left wing of the Western Front, and the crisis in which the troops of the 11th Guards Army found themselves by the end of the second decade of July 1943, demanded that the formation of the army be urgently completed and immediately sent to the front of hostilities - our faithful site of Orlovsky foothold.

In view of the fact that the staffing of the command staff of the army headquarters, individual corps and the army as a whole was delayed, and

1 TsAMORF, f. 323, op. 4756, d.4, l. 5.

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On July 19, the army departed for the front, and 5-6 days remained to put together the army headquarters and corps headquarters. And it was used to conduct only one command and staff exercise of the army headquarters with the headquarters of the corps.

The delay in staffing the army with personnel, artillery weapons and materiel did not make it possible to properly work with the officers of headquarters at all levels, as well as combat training of units and subdivisions. The assembly of the 30th Ural and 11th Tank Corps actually took only 12-15 days, and there was absolutely no time for the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps.

The delay in replenishing the army with command personnel did not make it possible to put together the army headquarters and corps headquarters at least in a shortened time frame. In addition, the staffing of the army headquarters was carried out hastily from officers who had not previously worked on an army scale, which drastically affected the management of army formations in the initial period of the operation!

If we take as a whole the shock tank group concentrated on the left wing of the Western Front (four tank corps and one - the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps, with a large number of tanks and self-propelled guns), then it was quite impressive, the largest of all, ever created in the Red Army.

Its weak point was the fact that for the most part the fighters and commanders of the 4th Panzer Army had not yet taken part in the hostilities. This was especially true of the main active link on the battlefield, on which the result of the battle depends - the crews of tanks and self-propelled guns. They had insufficient (as always - accelerated) field training, i.e. there was practically no work at the landfill

(tankdrome) with live firing at moving targets - "they fired a little and at stationary targets." In the hastily formed and manned formations of the Badanov army, by the time they went to the front, the level of training of the crews was clearly insufficient, especially for drivers who had driving experience from 5 to

1 TsAMORF, f. 323, op. 4756, d. 12, l.3.

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10 hours, while for confident control of the tank the required minimum is 25 hours.

The tank units of the 5th and 25th corps looked much better in this regard, but they entered combat operations almost immediately after protracted bloody battles, in which they suffered heavy losses. In the brigades of these tank formations, there remained the "backbone" of the senior and middle command levels, who had a lot of combat experience. It should be borne in mind that the crews of tanks and self-propelled guns in rare cases died completely. For the most part, one or two tankers were wounded, the rest remained in the ranks. Thus, the rotation of crew members took place, and in the next battle in the tank or self-propelled guns there were experienced tankers who "sniffed gunpowder", which often determined the competent actions of the entire crew in battle. This situation persisted in the platoon, company, battalion, when an experienced officer, a participant in the fighting, was literally valued "worth its weight in gold." The dead crew - a huge moral damage to the entire unit; a burned tank is a colossal loss for the state.

The brigades, in which there was a backbone of experienced commanders and fighters, participants in the hostilities, seemed to be more prepared than the newly formed ones, where the percentage of front-line soldiers was insignificant or there were none at all, as was observed during the preparation of the 30th UDTK.

"I am like a former participant in the fighting," recalled an experienced officer P.V. Kulvinsky, - I believe that the actions of the brigade (1st Guards Tank, 1941-1942) were successful because we countered the quantitative superiority of the enemy, first of all, with the high moral stamina of the personnel of the brigade. It was party and Komsomol: 92% of its personnel were members and candidates of the party and Komsomol. It must be added to this that there were soldiers fired upon in battles. Most of the crews had already taken part in the battles in the first months of the war. Each fighter knew his salary and methods of action in battle.

1 Cited. Cited from: Zhukov Yu.A. Selected works. In 2v.t. 2. People of the 40s. Notes of a war correspondent. M.: Thought, 1989. Pp. 59.

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SITUATION ON BOLKHOVSKY FRONT SECTION

GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

In the defense system of the Orlovsky bridgehead, three defensive nodes: Bolkhov in the north, Mtsensk in the northeast, and Kromy in the south, were of exceptionally important, I would say, strategic importance. They controlled the approaches to the main citadel of the bridgehead located in the center of Russia, the city of Orel.

Bolkhov, unlike Mtsensk, was located in the depths of the Orlovsky bridgehead, which did not give our troops the opportunity to immediately begin to storm it. In addition, it was connected with the front line by a dense network of roads, and with the rear - the Bolkhov-Orel, Bolkhov-Khotynets highways. Bolkhov was located 50 km from the railway line, which stretched from Orel to the Bryansk communication junction. From the Optukha station to Bolkhov, the Nazis urgently brought a narrow-gauge railway. Considering such an advantageous position of the city, the German command turned it into a large army supply base.

In addition to creating a heavily fortified defense system on the outskirts of Bolkhov, the enemy turned the city itself into an impregnable bastion. All the buildings of the former merchant city and most of the buildings (especially their first floor) are made of red brick, with thick (up to one meter) walls. Almost all buildings had semi-basements.

From the south and east, Bolkhov covered a chain of heights located in the bend of the Nugr River (40-50 meters wide, with

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steep left bank). And from the north and west, the city was covered by deep ravines. Thus, it was an exceptionally tactically advantageous frontier for all-round defense. Bolkhov heights dominated the entire surrounding area, which was visible to a considerable depth. This was facilitated by a large number of fairly tall churches in the city.

The enemy duly used all the advantages of the terrain. The few tank-accessible places were heavily mined, and therefore, during the upcoming assault, the emphasis was mainly on rifle units. The trenches with a large number of gun and machine-gun platforms and bunkers encircled Bolkhov along the slopes of the heights, and, if necessary, could cover all the approaches to the city with multi-layered fire. Stone houses, terraced along the slopes of heights and adapted for defense, complemented the reliable

protection.

Thus, the city of Bolkhov was a fortress that met all the requirements of modern defense. Without liquidating this key defensive center, our troops could not move either to the west or to the south. And this bastion was to be stormed by the troops of the 61st Army of General Belov.

TO THE NORTH-WEST OF BOLKHOV

At the end of the second decade of July 1943, the German united group, located on the Orlovsky bridgehead, found itself in a deep crisis.

Advancing towards the troops of the Central Front, the formations of the left wing of the Western Front on the Khotynets direction advanced more than 70 km. The shock group of the 11th army of Baghramyan already on July 17 was 10-5 km from Khotynia and 25 km from Karachev. The most important communication line of the entire Oryol grouping of the enemy was under serious threat. The 162nd tank brigade of Colonel Volynets from the 25th tank corps, acting with the main forces, "with bold and decisive attacks, defeating the counterattacking units of the pr-ka, by the morning of 19.07 cut the railway.

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Orel - Bryansk near Krasnaya Nov, destroyed 7 km of the canvas on the telephone and telegraph line ... "I.

The impending disaster came as a surprise to Hitler. In November 1942, a similar development of the offensive of the Soviet troops led to the encirclement and destruction of the 6th Army at Stalingrad. However, the 11th Guards Army stretched its units over a 150-kilometer sector and could not simultaneously attack both Khotynets and Bolkhov. Therefore, the offensive did not receive the proper development. The army of Baghramyan, no longer having the strength, could no longer attack in order to break into the rear of the 9th army, and the 4th tank army of Badanov was far from the place of the general battle and did not have the opportunity to build on the success of the guards. To strengthen the defense along the Vytebet River, Model hastily brought new units removed from all sectors of the Soviet-German front to the breakthrough site, thereby eliminating the crisis that arose at the beginning of the final stage of the battle for the Orlovsky bridgehead. Only Model, being, as always, on the spot, in the very center of the bubbling cauldron of battles, understood what danger threatened his entire grouping.

In a critical situation, he was helped by Colonel-General von Greim. He concentrated the efforts of his 6th Air Fleet on the Khotynets and Bolkhov directions. Aircraft specially designed to fight tanks - Yu-87, Xe-129 and FV-190 fighter-bombers - 3, 9 and 52nd assault squadrons of the 8th air

corps based in Karachev continuously assaulted tank units of the 11th Guards and 61st Armies. Under the cover of their fighters, they attacked the tank columns and destroyed them in a dive with armor-piercing weapons. At the same time, Xe-111 and Yu-88 bombers attacked the horizontal flight foxes of the concentration of our armored tank forces. Later, Colonel General Walter Model admits: "For the first time we managed to stop an enemy tank attack directed at the rear of two armies only by the forces of the Luftwaffe."

| Battle of Kursk Edited by I.V. Parotkin. - M.: Nauka, 1970. Pp. 496.

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As we can see, only thanks to the immediate involvement of powerful forces of the Luftwaffe did the Luftwaffe manage to delay the Soviet tank wedge (1.5 and 25 tank corps) until the German divisions approached from the south in order to close the gap and stabilize the front along the Vytebet River.

The plan of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command - to pincer the German troops on the Orlovsky bridgehead - was unraveled, and the plan - to attack Oryol and free him on the move - was thwarted by the German command. General Otto von Knobelsdorff reported: "Starting from July 21, the enemy no longer launched such powerful offensives. He suffered monstrous losses in the attacks and stood completely exhausted in front of the front. The next day there were only small attacks supported by tanks. The places of deep penetrations were localized one after another.

Nevertheless, the "ice broke", the Soviet troops found themselves fifteen kilometers from the main transport artery Orel - Bryansk. It was impossible to hold back their onslaught with one aircraft. The motorized division "Grossdeutschland" is urgently transferred to the area of hostilities from under the Belgorod. She was tasked with tightly closing the "Kho Tynetsky gates". How long?

Understanding the "delicacy" of the current situation, Colonel Teske, head of the transport service of the Orel united group of the enemy, on Thursday, July 22, ordered a partial evacuation from the Orlovsky bridgehead. First of all, the withdrawal of railway repair shops, technical equipment and able-bodied local population to the west began. A little later, Teske stated: "The evacuation from the Oryol Bulge was successful thanks to the persistent requests of the high command of the Army Group Center addressed to Hitler. If the evacuation had been carried out at the wrong time and unsuccessfully, then a second Stalingrad would have turned out.

As you can see, a few days before the order for a complete evacuation, the withdrawal of German troops began, which

was sewn by an avalanche starting from July 28.

Analyzing this brief but very intense and with yes

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The period of the battle in Oryol Polissya, Bagramyan notes in the book "My Memoirs": "We were close to the goal - someone to cut off the entire Oryol group from its communications. But, unfortunately, we had very, very few forces left for this: only two weakened divisions were advancing on Khoty.

Some 15-20 km separated us from Khotynets. The rapid advance in this direction, apparently, was also unexpected for our command: it did not have additional forces nearby, which were necessary for the development of success. Now the Headquarters hastily transferred the 11th combined arms and 4th tank armies here from their operational reserves. However, they were not yet fully formed and were far from the area of forthcoming operations. So for now, I had to rely only on myself.

But then, finally, we learned that our new neighbor, the 11th combined arms army under the command of my friend, combat general I.I. Fedyuninsky, went on the offensive. Her troops moved to the right of us. In two or three days they went 15 km to the west. However, the enemy reserves arrived in time to stop their further advance.

Having transferred their plots to the troops of General I.I. Fedyuninsky, our 31st Guards and 169th Rifle Divisions began to advance to the Khotynets direction, where extremely fierce battles flared up from July 25. In an effort to keep the railway in their hands, the enemy threw here everything that he could gather in the rear, up to security units, sapper and vehicle fleet battalions, as well as a significant number of tanks and artillery. <...> Long stubborn battles ensued, the front line was constantly moving either to the south or to the north. Only by August 4 did it stabilize at the Pyryatinka-Alekhino-Alisovo-Izmoroz' line, that is, 15 km north of the Orel-Bryansk railroad.

A well-developed network of good roads and communications shortened as a result of the withdrawal made it possible for the enemy to gain

1 Bagramyan I.Kh. My memories. - Yerevan: Hayastan, 1980. Pp. 531-532.

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take time and quickly pull up significant forces into the most threatened paradise
- primarily armored and mo-

torized divisions. With mobile connections at hand, the Germans preempted our units, occupying advantageous defensive lines.

In an attempt to push Bagramyan's formations into the forests north and northwest of the Bolkhov-Znamenskoye-Khotynets ring road, the enemy launched counterattacks: from the Studenka area to Ilinskoye - by the 253rd Infantry Division, from the Uzkoye area to Senki - by units of the 9th and 4th Panzer Divisions, from the area of Shemyakino and Vetrovo to Korentyaevo and Stolbchee - by units of the 10th Motorized, 20th and 18th Panzer Divisions.

In the first ten days of August, the 36th Guards Rifle and 25th Tank Corps occupied the Derlovo-Korentyaevo line, and the 8th Guards Rifle Corps, regrouping its forces, entrenched itself in the Stolbchee-Kozyulki but-Krivchee sector. The 5th tank corps, put into reserve, was concentrated in the area of Podlesnaya Sloboda, Gorodok, Yagodnaya.

Summing up, I note that the Germans, despite the concentration of large forces in the Khotynets and Bolkhovsky directions, failed to seize the initiative of hostilities in this sector. Units of the 36th, 8th Guards Rifle and 25th Tank Corps stopped the advance of the enemy, who sought to push our armies back to the former line of defense - to the Zhizdra River. The front stabilized along the Vytebet River.

NORTH OF BOLKHOV

In the second decade of July 1943, the enemy's Bolkhov grouping, as a result of a stubborn offensive by our troops, was engulfed from two sides. Left flank units of the 11th Guards Army approached Bolkhov from the northwest, threatening to cut the Bolkhov-Khotynets road. The shock group of the 61st Army - the 9th Guards Rifle Corps - reached the Krivtsov Heights and, with the help of the 20th

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the tank corps slowly but stubbornly advanced along the watershed of the Berezuyka and Nugr rivers, entering with its left flank from the east to the outskirts of Bolkhov. There was an immediate threat of the encirclement of the Bolkhovskaya grouping and the interception of the enemy's main communications - the highway (Orel - Bolkhov) and narrow gauge railway (station Optukha - Bolkhov). Together with the troops of the 11th Guards Army, advancing on the city from the west, formations of the 61st Army surrounded it from the north and northeast, thereby creating a threat to encircle the Bolkhov defense center.

By this time, all the reserves that were inside the Orlovsky bridgehead had already been used by the enemy. Os-

one thing was to be done: to withdraw troops from other, more peaceful sectors of the front. Then the German command sent the 26th Infantry Division to this area from the central section of the Kursk Bulge (the city of Sumy), free from hostilities, in order to: keep Bolkhov - the key to the northern gates of Orel. Its task: together with units of the 112th Infantry and 12th Panzer Divisions, with a repeated counteroffensive, push back the Russians and reach the southwestern bank of the Nugr River and force our troops to withdraw to their former line - beyond the Oka River.

On July 18, a reinforced enemy grouping launched a counter-offensive in the general direction of Anchakovo, Karagashinka. For two days the infantry and tanks of the enemy continuously counterattacked our units. The fighting was extremely fierce. All settlements located between the Nugr and Berezuika rivers were turned into tank-impregnable strongholds, and they had to be stormed. The troops of the 61st Army, having relatively easily captured a small bridgehead on the western bank of the Oka on the first day of the offensive, later met with stubborn opposition from the enemy, who began to transfer reserves here.

The Germans, with the forces of the 25th MD, 208, 112, 34th Infantry Division, 12th Division of the 270th Assault Gun Battalion, continued to offer fierce resistance in the sector of the 9th Guards Rifle Corps and, under the cover of rearguards, assault and bomber aviation, organizedly withdrew their units on the front of the advancing 46th Rifle Corps.

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Stubbornly defending at each intermediate line and counterattacking (up to nine times a day), the enemy was still unable to hold back the offensive of the troops of the right flank of the 61st Army, and by the end of July 20, units of the 46th Corps came out: the 356th Infantry Division - to the line Zhitnye Dvory - Krivchikovo - Kreshchensky; 97th Rifle Division - to the line of Esin - Budolbino - elev. high 144.0; 415th Rifle Division - to the line 500 meters northwest of Novolutovinovsky - Beketovo.

In order to improve the tactical position on the sector of the front south-west of Bolkhov, the Nazis withdrew to a more advantageous line, passing along the command heights, and on July 21] began to consolidate on this line: Khotetovo - Yamskaya - Lutovinovo - Martynovka - Osino - Rybino - Anokhin .

On July 22, stubborn, fierce battles began on the distant and near approaches to the city, as well as for Bolkhov itself.

After intense fighting, the troops of the 9th Guards, 46th Rifle and 20th Tank Corps of the 61st Army, gnawing through the enemy's defenses, in fierce battles with a continuously counterattacking enemy, advanced to Bolkhov by only 15 km and covered the Bolkhov group with north east. The rate of advance of our troops was very low - only 1 km per day.

In order to still hold the city of Bolkhov, the northern citadel of the Orlovsky bridgehead, the commander of the enemy united grouping, General Model, carries out significant structural changes: parts of the 25th motorized, 18th tank and 208th infantry divisions are united into an independent group by General -Major von Schlieffen (commander of the 18th TD); parts of the 26th Infantry and 12th Panzer Divisions were combined into a separate group of Major General Wiese (commander of the 26th Infantry Division).

General Schlieffen's group was given the task of holding back Soviet troops under mobile defense for as long as possible and preventing them from breaking through to Bolkhov from the northwest, as well as preventing the capture of the Bolkhov-Karachev road; those. the group defended Bolkhov from the advancing 11th Guards Army of Baghramyan from the northwest.

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The group of General Wiese was to ensure the withdrawal of Schlieffen's formations and cover them from a flank attack by our troops. At the same time, she had to keep the Bolkhov-Orel highway behind her for as long as possible, i.e. to defend the city from the attack of the troops of the 61st Army from the northeast.

Relying on a pre-prepared defense system around Bolkhov and hiding in buildings, churches and basements in the city itself, the Nazis, counterattacking with groups of submachine gunners and using sniper fire, stubbornly defended Bolkhov, ensuring the withdrawal of their grouping from the front to the northwest and west of the city.

It should be noted the successful combat operations of the formations of the 110th and 336th rifle divisions of the 61st army, which, advancing along the left bank of the Oka, liberated many settlements: Pashinkovo, Maloye Dezhkino, Sonino, Tel'chie, etc. Units of the 110th divisions reached the bridge across the Oka at Karandakovo.

As a result, the success of these divisions and the advance towards them by the troops of Gorbатов's 3rd Army, which were about to close the encirclement around the Mtsensk group at Tel'chie and Karandakovo, forced the German command on July 20 to leave the important northeastern stronghold of the Orlovsky bridgehead - the city of Mtsensk and withdraw from there and your troops to Orel.

The commander of the 3rd Army, General Gorbатов, decided to use the success achieved (the liberation of Mtsensk) and on the shoulders of the retreating enemy to force the river. Oka in the Zhukovo-Kakurinka section, and then, bypassing Orel from the north and northwest, take possession of it.

TO THE EAST OF BOLKHOV

On the evening of July 20, army formations received an order: the 283rd Rifle Division with the 13th Guards Tank Regiment, on the morning of the next day, force the Oka in the Zhukovo-Lomovets section and, having captured a bridgehead on the western coast, advance in the direction of Bornyakovo, Balduyevo.

308th Rifle Division with 114th Tank Regiment -

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cross the Oka in the Lomovets-Kakurinka section and advance in the direction of Paslovo, Zamezensky, the northwestern outskirts of Orel.

The 342nd and 186th rifle divisions with the 253rd and 82nd tank regiments are to seize a bridgehead on the western bank of the Oka in the Khryka area, as well as crossings on the Optukha River in the Snetskaya Luka, Kalinovka, Lunevo, Ermolaevo areas for an attack on Eagle from the northeast; to have the main grouping of forces on the Khryki-Parakhino front.

The 380th Rifle Division - from the line of Ermolaevo - De Ryuzhkino, force the Optukha River and advance on Orel from the east and southeast through Razuvaevo, Luzhki.

On the way of the advancing troops of the right wing of the 3rd Army there was a large water line - the Oka River, the crossing of which without preliminary preparation and in the absence of the necessary crossing facilities was difficult. Within the limits of the Orlovsky strategic bridgehead, this was the last defensive line of the enemy, with the loss of which the further defense of the entire bridgehead by the Germans became impossible. Naturally, serious enemy resistance was to be expected at this water line.

At the same time, the commander of the Bryansk Front, General Popov, following the instructions of the General Staff and the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, changed the direction of the strike of the 3rd Panzer Army. Now she had to return almost to her starting line, from which she began the offensive on July 19, and advance on Orel.

On July 21, at 3:00 a.m., the commander of the 3rd Panzer Army was given a new task: to make a sharp turn in a southwestern direction and, advancing on Zolotarevo - Stanovoy Kolodez, to capture the Khotetovo (Sverdlovsky district) - Kulikovka (Orlovsky district) line n), further acting around Orel, or in a northwestern direction on Naryshkino, or in a southwestern direction - on Kromy '.

By the evening of July 21, Rybalko's army formations took their starting position.

"The combat and strength of 3 TA on 07/22/43 was as follows

1 TsAMORF, f. 315, op. 4440, d. 18, l. 9-10.

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blowing: T-34 tanks - 324, T-70 - 173, 122-mm self-propelled guns - 27, about 300 guns of various calibers, including 36 anti-tank 85-mm, about 350 mortars of various calibers and 13 guards. mortars M-13, "Katyusha".

On July 22, at 12 o'clock, the 91st brigade captured the Sobakino settlement, giving the troops the opportunity to cross the river. Optushka.

In the region of the river Optushka was defended by the forces of the 8th TD, 262nd and 78th SD, having 60 tanks and self-propelled guns, 250 guns of various calibers, and up to 200 mortars.

Possessing a colossal advantage over the enemy, as we see from the documents of the archive of the 3rd Panzer Army, Rybalko's tankers, together with the infantrymen of the 63rd Kolpakchi Army, were unable to "flash" the entire depth of the enemy's defenses in the area between the Optushka and Optukha rivers and enter the operational space, with in order to immediately break into Orel from the southeast. After 14 km, covered with battles and heavy losses, the movement of the 3rd Panzer Army to Orel was stopped on the right bank of the river. Optuha. The task set by the command of the Bryansk Front for Rybalko's tank and mechanized formations turned out to be unfulfilled.

Fulfilling the order of the commander of the Bryansk Front, General Popov, on July 21, the troops of the 3rd Army Gorbatoev went on the offensive. The 342nd Rifle Division crossed the river in two places. Oka and captured two bridgeheads on the western bank: one on the right flank, in the MTS area, and the other on the left, near Chizhovka. However, repeated attempts by units of the division to expand the captured bridgeheads were not successful. The Germans firmly blocked the subdivisions of the division that crossed to the western coast and inflicted heavy losses on them with continuous counterattacks.

Parts of the 235th Rifle Division also failed to use their bridgehead captured in the area of Bogatishchevo. The 283rd Rifle Division, having crossed part of its forces to the western bank of the Oka, captured the enemy stronghold of Lomovets and started fighting for Plautino. Soon from the area vys. 207.5, the enemy counterattacked parts of the division, which were forced to leave Lomovets and retreat to their original

location.

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The 308th Rifle Division left its bridgehead west of Novaya Slobodka.

During the day, with strong artillery and mortar fire, the enemy fired at the location of our troops on the

on the exact bank of the Oka River. Enemy aircraft continuously bombed road junctions and positions of our artillery. In just one day on July 21, German aviation made over 1,000 sorties.

By this time, the enemy managed to bring fresh forces to the line of the Oka and Optukha rivers: the 2nd and 12th tank, 20th motorized, 34th, 112th infantry and 78th assault divisions and other special units intended for fighting tanks. Holding back our advancing units, the enemy escaped complete encirclement at Mtsensk, withdrew part of his forces from the Oleshnya River and managed to organize a defense along the western banks of the Oka and Optukha rivers.

In this regard, the commander of the 3rd Army decided to temporarily gain a foothold on the reached line, pull up artillery, put the units in order, replenish them, prepare crossing facilities, open the grouping of enemy forces, if possible, and then attack the enemy. Thus, only on July 23 did the troops of the left wing of the Bryansk Front complete the second stage of the Oryol-Mtsensk operation - they broke through the enemy's strong intermediate defensive zone along the river. Oleshna. The breakthrough of the defensive line on the Optukha River with the entry of the troops of the 3rd Panzer Army into the operational space, as planned, did not take place.

On the night of July 24, the front commander ordered the 3rd and 63rd armies to regroup their forces in order to capture the city of Orel in the shortest possible time with concentric attacks from the north and south. The 3rd Army was to strike in the direction of Orel from the north and northwest, and the 63rd Army from the south and southeast. The start of the offensive was scheduled for 25 July. A new dividing line was established between the armies (Lukyanchikovo, Orel, and further along the Orlik River), and the city of Orel entered the zone of the 63rd Army. The 3rd Guards Tank Army and the 1st Guards Tank Corps were withdrawn to the rear, to the Novosil area, to the reserve

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commanding the front. Instead, the 17th Guards Brigade was transferred to the 3rd Army, and the 87th Tank Brigade to the 63rd Army.

The German command, trying to delay the advance of our troops to the west and at least temporarily stabilize the front at the turn of the Oka River, transferred units of the 12th Panzer Division operating in the Bolkhov area to the Orel region. On the western bank of the Oka, German forces were regrouped and concentrated mainly east of Orel in the Lomovets-Stanovoi Kolodez sector. The 56th Infantry Division, replenished during the fighting, the 2nd and 12th Panzer Divisions and a number of separate units took up defense here.

Despite the fact that the enemy these days continuously fired artillery and mortar fire on the eastern banks of the Oka and Optukha rivers, the troops of the 3rd and 63rd armies of the Bryansk Front

they successfully completed the regrouping of forces in a short time and the red light on July 25 was fully prepared for the offensive.

On July 25, at 8 o'clock, under the cover of artillery and aviation fire, the shock group of the 3rd Army resumed its attack on the Apalkov Heights. Using improvised means (boards, small rafts, logs), within 20-30 minutes she crossed with her main forces to the western bank of the Oka River and, with the first transfer of artillery fire in depth, attacked the enemy defenses.

Having discovered the deployment of the 25th Rifle Corps near Gorka, the enemy command sent about 100 dive bombers to this sector, which continuously bombed the combat formations of rifle divisions for three hours. At 2 p.m., the right-flank 362nd Rifle Division was subjected to a strong enemy counterattack, supported by tanks, from the Yulyevka area and was forced to gain a foothold in the Savenkovo area. The 186th Rifle Division captured Kamenka at the end of the day and could not advance any further.

General Gorbатов decided to use the success achieved by the 342nd Rifle Division, which had captured a bridgehead on the right bank of the Oka, ordering it to move west on July 26 and capture the Apalkovo-Chupakhino line,

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to gain a foothold on it and ensure the entry of the 362nd and 182nd rifle divisions. On the morning of July 26, the troops of these divisions crossed the Oka in the front line of the 342nd Infantry Division from the Gorki-Gorodishche line and began to advance in the direction of high. 234.1, Polyana, but did not achieve success.

The resistance of the Germans, who pulled up fresh reserves to the breakthrough site, became more and more stubborn. Parts of the 20th non-German motorized division in the evening launched a strong counterattack from the Gostyino area on the left flank of the 269th Infantry Division and forced it to leave Savenkovo.

Thus, in three days of intense offensive fighting on the western bank of the Oka, the 3rd Army achieved insignificant results, only slightly pressing the enemy's defenses on its right flank. "28-30.07. units of the 3rd Army practically do not participate in hostilities, with the exception of the 342nd Rifle Division, which is fighting for the Apalkovsky Heights!

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SOUTH OF BOLKHOV

On July 24, troops of the 132nd and 211th rifle divisions of the 70th Army, after many days of bloody battles, with the support of tank and artillery units, liberated the regional center of Trosna.

In the offensive zone of the 48th Army, fierce battles were fought for the capture of a section of the Zmievka-Borisoglebskoye railway. On the night of July 25, as a result of stubborn fighting, the soldiers of the 137th and 73rd rifle divisions of the army of General Romanenko liberated the regional center and the Zmievka railway station.

Now a tense struggle flared up in the Kromskoye direction, where formations of the 13th, 2nd tank and 70th armies were advancing. This targeted strike, combined with the attack of the Western Front in the direction of Khotynets from the north, with successful hostilities, could lead to encirclement

1 TsAMORF, f. 310, op. 3476, d. 102, l. 295.

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Oryol grouping of German troops. Therefore, the main forces of the 46th and 47th tank corps were thrown against the troops of the Central Front, reinforced by anti-tank grenadier battalions, as well as separate divisions of assault installations. Reclaiming literally meter by meter, the troops of the Central Front stubbornly moved forward.

On July 25, Rokossovsky, having previously coordinated his actions with the commander of the Western Front, Colonel General V.D. Sokolovsky, ordered the troops of the 2nd tank army to advance with the task of cutting through the defenses of the 46th tank corps of the enemy. Troops of Lieutenant General of Tank Troops A.G. Rodina wedged 5 km into the position of the 102nd Infantry Division, which was located in the Muravchik, Zolotoe Dno area, and therefore their movement to the north stalled.

The enemy offered stubborn resistance to the troops of the Central Front advancing in the Kromskoye direction. Therefore, in order to accelerate the advance of the strike group of the Central Front on July 26, the 3rd Panzer Army was transferred to its composition! Having made a march to the Rybnitsa region, on the morning of July 28, the army went on the offensive with the task of breaking through the enemy defenses on the Malaya Rybnitsa River and reaching the Khmelevaya region (15-20 km north of Krom). Having in the first echelon the 6th and 7th Guards Tank Corps of Generals M.I. Zinkovich, Hero of the Soviet Union F.N. Rudkin and the 91st separate tank brigade of Colonel Yakubovsky, the army crossed the Malaya Rybnitsa river in the upper reaches and went to the Reutovo, Filosofovo, Nikolskoye area. On this, her movement to the west was stopped by the enemy.

- By order of the NPO No. 0404 dated 07/26/1943, army units: 2nd MK, 12th and 15th shopping malls - were transformed into guards, respectively - into the 7th guards mechanized, 6th guards tank and 7th 1st Guards Tank Corps.

CRISIS OF OPERATION "KUTUZOV"

So, the day of July 25, 1943 was supposed to be the decisive day of the struggle for the Orlovsky bridgehead, but it did not become that kov.

In the Oryol direction on July 25, on Sunday, the left wing troops of the Bryansk Front launched an offensive by forcing the Oka and Optukha rivers. Large forces of German divisions put up stubborn resistance, going over to counterattacks in some sectors. The attack on Orel by the armies of Generals Gorbatov, Kolpakchi and Rybalko was stopped. The decisive assault on the regional center was postponed indefinitely. Covering the Orel-Bolkhov highway, along the heights of the western bank of the Oka, units of the 26th, 112th, 34th infantry, 20th motorized and 8th tank divisions held the defense. Further to the east and southeast, along the banks of the Op Tukha River, units of the 56th Infantry, 2nd and 12th Panzer Divisions of the enemy defended themselves. They also covered the Eagle from the north from the attack by the troops of our 3rd Army.

In the Karachev and Khotynets directions, the enemy, with the forces of the 296th, 134th, 183rd, 211th, 95th, 707th, 253rd Infantry Divisions, the 5th Panzer, Motorized Division "Gross Germany", holding back our offensive, managed to push the troops of Bagr Myan from the railway to Khotynets - Karachev stretch, and then created a strong line of defense along the Vytebet River.

In the Bolkhovsky direction, powerful enemy mobile forces consisting of the 9th Panzer, 10th Motorized, 20th, 18th Panzer and 25th Motorized Divisions, waging active defensive battles, managed to gain a foothold on the turn of Volobuyevo - High - Korentyaevo - Luchki - north

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western outskirts of Bolkhov. Having created a strong and deep defense at this line, reinforced by tanks dug into the ground, the Germans put up stubborn resistance, covering the left flank and rear of the Bolkhov group. Further to the east and southeast, covering the Orel-Bolkhov highway, units of the 26th, 112th, 34th infantry, 20th motorized, 56th infantry, 2nd and 12th tank divisions of the enemy defended themselves. They also covered Orel from the north from the attack of our 3rd troops.

army.

In the Kromskoye direction, the enemy launched a series of powerful counterattacks and formations of XXXXXUP and XXXXXM tank corps, reinforced by mobile grenadier and armored units, stopped the advance of forces

13th and 2nd tank armies, and also forced units of Rybalko's 3rd tank army to retreat to the right bank of the Malaya Rybnitsa river. The movement of the troops of the Central Front to the north - to Khotynets - stalled.

In the offensive operations of the troops of the Red Army in the Oryol direction, a crisis ensued.

Now let's try to answer the question: what was its cause? Why did the troops of the Central Front, as well as the Bryansk and Western Fronts, not break into the entire depth of the defense of the German troops in the sectors of the front of the Oryol Bulge intended for a breakthrough: did not encircle and destroy the German grouping, not only on the fifth day from the start of the Oryol offensive operation, as it was envisaged by the plan, but also on the 15th day, but they gave her the opportunity, almost in full force, by mid-August 1943, to withdraw to the west, to the previously prepared defensive line - the Hagen line.

The Soviet command when planning the offensive operation "Kutuzov", including when setting tasks for the troops of the Western and Central fronts (they were given the task of breaking through the front in their sectors, then, moving towards each other, unite in the Khotynets area and thereby "close in pincers" Model's troops), made three gross miscalculations. Rokossovsky mentions two of them in his memoirs:

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1. "It seems to me that the Headquarters did not take into account the fact that the enemy troops (2nd Panzer and 9th Armies) were on the Orlovsky bridgehead for more than a year, which allowed them to create a strong, defense in depth."

2. "In addition, by the beginning of our offensive, the Oryol grouping of the enemy had significantly increased."

3. The mistake that the Soviet military leadership, including Rokossovsky, prefers to keep silent about, was to completely ignore the fact that the 9th Army (as of July 14, 1943 and all the troops of the enemy's Oryol grouping) was commanded by Colonel General Walter Model is a military specialist of the highest class, nicknamed "the lion of defense" in military circles. Having indisputable authority with Hitler, he could have as many troops as he considered necessary, in accordance with the situation that had developed on his sector of the front. That is why, in July 1943, divisions were withdrawn from the Belgorod and Smolensk sectors of the front and transferred to the Orlovsky bridgehead. The expediency of such operational maneuvering by Wehrmacht troops at that time was determined not by Hitler, but by Model.

There were other negative factors that

lied at the pace of the advance of our troops.

The method of combat operations chosen by the Soviet command in this sector of the front consisted in inflicting a frontal attack on the enemy. Taking into account numerous historical examples, it can be argued that nothing can justify inflicting a frontal strike on an enemy who is firmly holding his positions.

Rokossovsky's subjective mistake was that he did not insist on reworking the Kutuzov operation plan, at least for his front. Probably, he, like all representatives of the highest command staff, was confident in the success of his troops on his sector of the front, just like the entire Soviet command - in the success of the operation "Kutuzov" - in 4 days "to surround the Oryol grouping of the enemy, cut through to pieces and destroy it."

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Rokossov SKY mentioned this missed opportunity: "... it would be easier and more accurate to deliver two main strong blows to Bryansk (one from the north, the second from the south). At the same time, it was necessary to provide an opportunity for the troops of the Western and Central Fronts to carry out an appropriate regrouping!

In his memoirs, Konstantin Konstantinovich Rokossovsky also noted that in this operation, as in all the others that make up the Oryol strategic offensive operation as a whole, "The Headquarters allowed unnecessary haste, which was not caused by the situation that had developed in this sector <...> Therefore, the troops in the decisive axes were unable to prepare in such a short time for the successful fulfillment of the assigned tasks, and the operation took on a protracted character. The enemy was pushed out of the Orlovsky ledge, and not his thunder»> 2.

The troops of the Central Front, having moved the enemy, who had settled into a strong defense, began to slowly move to the northwest and only by the beginning of August approached the outpost of defense of the southeastern section of the Orlovsky bridgehead - the city of Kromy. Now there was no question of any encirclement and destruction of the Oryol group. At that time, there was no one and nothing to surround and destroy the enemy troops due to large losses.

In continuous and bloody battles, the troops of the Red Army suffered much more damage than the troops of the Wehrmacht. And not only because our three fronts were advancing, and the advancing side always has much greater losses than the defending side. The losses were huge also because the troops of Sokolovsky, Popov and Rokossovsky advanced head-on, breaking through the multi-lane and well-thought-out fortification defensive system of the enemy, continuously storming his powerful defense centers,

created at almost all command heights.

As a result of such hostilities, when the maneuver is like

1 Rokossovsky K.K. Soldier duty. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1997. Pp. 280.2 Ibid. Page 280-281.

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of a strategic and tactical nature - there was no shaft, the Soviet troops suffered huge losses. For example, the divisions of the 61st Army from July 11 to July 25 inclusive lost 29,033 people, of which 5,548 were killed and 23,485 were wounded! Significant losses in armament were suffered by the tank units of the 61st Army in offensive battles on the Bolkhovsky direction.

LOSS OF TANKS AND SAUV 61st ARMIIS P PO26.07.1943 G.2

20th TC: irretrievably lost - 82 SU-122 tanks -8

Hit - 7Ztanka SU-122 -2

68th brigade: lost irretrievably -18 hit - 28

36th TP: irrevocably - 15

1539 SAP - SAU 152 -3

Rifle formations and units suffered especially great damage. Take, for example, the losses of the 110th Rifle Division. Continuously advancing day and night, stubbornly moving forward, from July 11 to July 31, she lost 4326 soldiers and commanders, of which 1075 were killed, 48 were missing and 2399 were wounded, which accounted for 52 percent of the original composition (8020 Human); The 1289th Marine Rifle Regiment of this division lost 1662 soldiers in battles (respectively: 346 + 25 + 1291 people). The losses of the regiment during the incomplete month and continuous offensive exceeded its original composition - 1497 people.

Approximately the same losses were suffered by the rifle formations of the 11th Guards Army. From July 11 to July 20, ten divisions of the attack group of Baghramyan's army lost

1 TsAMORF, f. 418, op. 10695, d. 6, l. 132. 2 Ibid., l. 136-144.

3 Ibid., f. 1304, op. 2, d. 8, l. 29-219; d. 28, l. 16-109; 36, l. 1-110;

f. 1289th mrep, op. 52391 (c), d. 28, l. 1—101-

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3,467 killed and 17,231 wounded.' On average, each division lost only in the first 11 days of fighting 2000 "active bayonets", i.e. the most trained fighters of rifle battalions.

The irretrievable losses of the personnel of the 3rd Army from July 11 to July 23 amounted to 4,755 people, another 13,337 people left due to injury².

The rifle divisions of the left wing of the Western and entire Bryansk fronts in the battles from July 11 to July 31 lost 165,867 soldiers, of which 40,445 were irretrievably and 125,422 were wounded, which accounted for almost 39 percent of their total initial composition - 428,361 people ?.

Rybalko's 3rd Panzer Army suffered huge losses. In the battles on the Orlovsky bridgehead, from July 19 to July 31, tankers lost 3,808 killed and missing and 5,783 wounded. During this time, the army irretrievably lost half of its tank fleet, namely: 209 T-34 medium tanks (52% of the original composition) and 100 T-70 light tanks (or 50%)*.

The troops of the Central Front, storming the defenses of the southern sector of the Orlovsky bridgehead, suffered the same significant losses. It is probably for this reason that the archives of the 13th Army are still closed, so it is still not possible to publish accurate time-based data on the losses of the formations of the Central Front.

As noted above, the Wehrmacht in the defensive battle on the Orlovsky bridgehead suffered incomparably fewer losses than the Soviet troops. Nevertheless, the damage of the two German armies was very impressive and the maximum since the beginning of the Second World War - September 1, 1939

' There, f. 358, op. 596, d. 354, l. 123-150.

? TsAMO RF, f. 202, op. 5, d. 1273, l. 1—8 (vol.); F. 358, op. 596, d. 354, l. 123-150.

3 NAMO RF, f. 357, op. 5973, d. 25, l. 107-122; f. 358 he. 5920, d.9, l.2-32; f. 290, op. 3282, d. 23, l. 194-197; f. 315, op. 4444, d. 3, l. 76-82; f. 202, op. 7, d. 108; f. 204, op. 7889, d. 5, l. 65.; Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: Statistical research - M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2001. Pp. 286.

Note. The data does not take into account the notes of the 3rd Tank Army and the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps, and they were very significant.

4 TsAMO RF, f. 315, op. 4440, d. 18, l. 16-17, 112

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of the year. Thus, over the last ten days of July 1943, the troops of the Orel united group of the enemy lost 62,035 soldiers and officers, of which 11,279 were killed, 7,557 were missing (mostly captured) and 43,199 were wounded. .

RESULTS OF OPERATION "KUTUZOV" BY JULY 26

And yet, I note that the main result of the first fifteen days of the battle for the Orlovsky bridgehead was that, despite the stubborn, well-thought-out and organized resistance of the largest German grouping, the prerequisites were created for striking with the aim of encircling and subsequently destroying not only the main - Bolkhovskiy, - but also Oryol defense knots. Our troops had the opportunity to strike from the north on the flank and reach the deep rear of the main forces of the Oryol grouping of the enemy, which was on the defensive.

By July 1, 1943, the Oryol Bulge (400 km long) with its semicircle moved away from the direct front to the east by 180 km, hanging over it with the so-called "Oryol Balcony" (an area of 25,000 sq. km).

By July 26, 1943, as a result of coordinated hostilities of three fronts, only a third of the territory of the Orlovsky bridgehead was cleared of Nazi troops, only one outpost of the enemy's defense was liberated - the city of Mtsensk, which was located almost on the front line.

At the beginning of Operation Kutuzov, the most successful were the actions of the troops of the left wing of the Western Front - the 11th Guards Army, reinforced by the 1st and 5th Tank Corps. Their advance from the Kirov region to the south was at its maximum, and on July 25 was up to 70 km. The troops of Bagramyan's army went to the shores of Vytebet, threatening to cut communications at Khotynets. The troops of the 61st Army and the 20th Tank Corps (the right wing of the Bryansk Front) approached Bolkhov directly, pressing a huge "dent" in the enemy's defenses.

Troops of the 3rd, 63rd and 3rd Tank Armies of the Bryansk Front

1 VA-MA VU bu 558.

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advanced from Zushi to the east and reached the banks of the Oka and Optukha rivers.

The troops of the Central Front had by this time the smallest advance of all fronts - only 15-20 km from the Svapa River to the north-west to the line of Stanovoy Kolodez - Nesterov - Nikolskoye - 10 km north-west of the Trosna settlement.

The headquarters of the Supreme High Command put the question squarely: to cut off the Oryol ledge - and that's it. This necessity was dictated by the situation on the entire Soviet-German front. Not a single offensive operation of the Red Army could now begin until the moment when the Oryol grouping of Germans, hanging over our troops, located in the very center of the Soviet-German front, was moved and thrown back far to the west. And that's why.

With a successful offensive - whether it be in the Smolensk direction (north of Orel), whether it be in the Kiev direction (southwest of Orel) - our troops fell under the flank attack of the enemy's Oryol grouping - the strongest, mobile (12 tank and motorized divisions, as well as 10 separate anti-tank divisions, a regiment of self-propelled guns and 2 separate tank regiments), with the most experienced, for years, knocked together management, headed by "General of Defense" Walter Model.

How can this be done: to move such a powerful Hitlerite colossus from its place and ultimately straighten the Oryol Bulge? The Operations Department of the General Staff sought an answer to this question in order to propose it to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Comrade Stalin. In addition, it was necessary to get out of the crisis in which the troops of the three fronts of the Red Army found themselves on July 25, 1943.

And there was only one answer: to use the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command - the 4th tank army and the 2nd guards cavalry corps.

I think the Kremlin had no other option but to act on this last reserve. It seems to me that initially all this "reserve" was prepared for the Smolensk offensive operation under the code name "Suvorov".

PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

The time for the beginning of the offensive operations of the Red Army in the summer of 1943 was inexorably approaching. Taking into account the catastrophe of last year's summer campaign on the southern sector of the Soviet-German front - near Kharkov, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command this time determined that our troops would deliver the first and main blow in the center of the Soviet-German front, their goal was to destroy the largest grouping of the Wehrmacht - Oryol (as of July 10, 1943 - about 600 thousand people).

For the successful conduct of hostilities in the Orel, and then in the Smolensk directions, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command not only took care of the formation of the reserve, but also hurried to complete it on time. In June-July there was an accelerated recruitment of the 3rd and 4th tank armies. 3rd

the tank army had been under reorganization since the beginning of April 1943, and by mid-July it was completely ready for combat operations, being located not far from the line of the Bryansk front - in the area of Plavsk. The process of manning the 4th Panzer Army was obviously dragging on. All three corps were far from each other and from the front lines. Closest to the front was the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps - in the Linen Factory area (Kaluga region).

The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command demanded that the relevant departments complete the recruitment of the 4th Tank Army by July 1, 1943, which was formed on the basis of the 19th Cavalry Corps.

"1.4 TA was formed according to the state No. 010/450 according to the order of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command dated 06.26.43 No. 46194 / os in the areas: Solnechnogorsk, Zagorsk, Kubinka. Lieutenant-General Badanov was appointed Commander of the Army.

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a) The army included 11 shopping malls, ZO shopping malls, 6 guards. MK, 51 MCP, 51 armored battalion, 118 communications regiment, 88 engineer. b-n, service units and rear establishments;

6) in fact, the formation of the army lasted 13 days, from 4 to 16.07.43, 6th Guards. MK continued to form until the moment the army left for the front (07/18/43).

2. The formation of corps refers to different periods:

a) 11 tk was formed on 07/01/42 in the city of Gorky, took part in the battles as part of 5tk2 TA. V4TA arrived on 07/18/43, consisting of: 12 MSBR, 65 Tank Brigade, 20 Tank Brigade, all tank brigades did not have materiel. Already during the fighting on 07/25/43, 738 iptads and 1388 zap arrived in the corps;

6) 30 UDTK was formed on the initiative of the Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Molotov (now Perm. - E. Shch.) Regional Committees of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks in the period from 11/26/42 to 03/20/43. The corps included: 197, 243, 244 brigade and 30 msbr. The corps arrived in the army on 06/10/43;

c) b gv. MK is formed on the basis of 3 TV. MRD in the cities of Krasnozavodsk and Zagorsk in accordance with the directive of the General Staff of the spacecraft No. 39188 / SS dated 17.06.43.

3. During the formation of formations and units of the army, as the personnel and materiel arrived, the troops of the army were engaged in combat training!

. TsAMO RF, f. 323, op. 4756, d. 12, l. 2-4. Report of the Commander of the 4th

Guards Tank Army Guards Colonel General D.D. Lelyushenko "On the combat operations of the 4th TA of the Western and Bryansk fronts in the Oryol operation from 26.07. to 28.08.43" dated March 22, 1946, signed by D.D. Le Lushenko. This document was intended to "... analyze the offensive of the troops of the 4th TA and identify instructive moments in the actions of the TA in the Oryol operation", was prepared (or rather, rewritten word for word by the employees of the operational department of the army) on the basis of the "Report on military operations troops of the 4th TA from 26.07. to 25.08.43", presented to the commander of the armored and mechanized troops of the Red Army, Colonel General Ya.N. Fedorenko back in October 1943 (see TsAMO RF, f. 323, op. 4756, d. 4, l. 111). It is known that instead of V.M. Badanov, on 03/29/44, Lieutenant General D.D. was appointed commander of the 4th Tank Army. Lelyushenko. On March 17, 1945, for military merit, the army was transformed into the 4th Guards Tank Army.

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The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and the General Staff of the Red Army approved Lieutenant General of the Tank Troops Vasily Mikhailovich Badanov as commander of the 4th Tank Army. It should be noted that he was the first in the Red Army to be awarded the Order of Suvarov, 2nd class. The 24th Tank Corps, which he commanded in the battles near Stalingrad, was transformed into the 2nd Guards Tatsinsky Tank Corps. Major General of Tank Troops Yevtikhy Emelyanovich Belov, who had previously held the post of deputy commander of the 57th Army, was appointed deputy commander of the army; Chief of Staff - Colonel Pavel Ilyich Drugov, former Chief of Staff of the 12th Army. Chief of the Operations Department of the Army Headquarters - Lieutenant Colonel Nikolai Ivanovich Maierov, Commander of Artillery - Colonel Alexei Alexandrovich Kuznetsov, Head of the Intelligence Department - Nikolai Vasilievich Bzyrin, Deputy Commander for Logistics - Colonel Pavel Georgievich Khitenkov, Head of the Armored Supply and Repair Department - General Major of the technical troops Afanasy Yakovlevich Krivokonev, head of the engineering troops - Colonel Mikhail Afanasyevich Poluektov, head of the signal troops - Colonel Nikolai Petrovich Zakharov.

Member of the Military Council of the Army - Major General of the Tank Forces Vasily Georgievich Gulyaev. From the first days of the war - at the front, first commissar of a division, brigade, and then the 17th tank corps; participant in the battles near Vitebsk and Smolensk, Moscow and Stalingrad. For successful combat operations near Stalingrad, the 17th Tank Corps was transformed into the 4th Guards Kantemirovsky, and the corps commissar V.G. Gulyaev was awarded the Order for distinction in battles

Lenin.

THE MOMENT IS LOST

The culminating period of the battle for the Orlovsky strategic bridgehead was the third decade of July 1943. These days the fate of the entire summer campaign was decided and decided.

nii, the outcome of the confrontation between the two giants, Germany and Russia, two peoples - Russian and German.

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Tension at the front grew daily and reached its height in the northwestern sector of the bridgehead near Khotynets. A short entry appeared in the diary of military operations of the headquarters of the Wehrmacht Supreme High Command on July 20: "In the Belgorod region, the reduction of our front made it possible to free up reserves. In the zone of the 2nd Panzer Army, powerful enemy tank formations broke through to the Bryansk-Orel railway.

As a result of the failure of the offensive of Manstein's strike force through Prokhorovka to Kursk, the Germans, having returned by that time to their former defensive line near Belgorod, began to transfer divisions of the shock armored wedge from here to areas where a crisis was brewing at that time. A critical situation (and this was accurately noted in the diary) developed on the section of the Bryansk-Orel railway. In this place (near Khotynets), according to the plan of the Soviet command, the steel pincers of Russian tank wedges, which made their way here from the north and south, were supposed to close. The largest Oryol group of Germans was supposed to be in the "cauldron". But the "second Stalingrad" did not take place. And that's why.

In war it is important not to underestimate the strength of the enemy. It is equally important to understand his intentions and unravel his plans in time. Such an understanding is a necessary prerequisite for timely foreseeing and preventing enemy actions.

The German command, primarily the commander of the combined Oryol grouping, Colonel-General Walter Model, guessed the intentions of our command - "encircle and destroy" - and demanded that Hitler urgently provide him with additional divisions. Moreover, Model insisted that three elite divisions be urgently sent here: the 253rd 26th Infantry and the motorized "Grossdeutschland" with reinforcements. For the time being, the first held Bolkhov, and "Great Germany" tightly closed the "Khotynets gate" for ten days (see maps No. 1 and 2 in the block of color maps and diagrams).

That critical moment was reflected in his memoirs by

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Commander of the 26th Infantry Division, General Wiese: "On July 17, it became known that the enemy's operational goal was to break the Oryol Bulge. On the same day, Operation Citadel was halted. At the hour of the highest tension, the command of the forces located on the Oryol Bulge, including the 2nd

tank army, was handed over to Colonel General Model.

On July 18, the situation in the area of operation of the 2nd Panzer Army escalated to the limit. The plan for a Russian breakthrough to the south was thwarted almost at the last moment. At a critical moment, the 26th Infantry Division managed to enter the battle, although the enemy wedged in the Bolkhov-Orel direction and broke through the defense front. The road near Bolkhov was to remain in our hands, since it was the only one in the combat area north of Orel, which, in the event of a retreat, could be used by the combined troops and front-line transport.

The 26th Infantry Division was ordered to prepare to repel an enemy attack at an intermediate line southeast of Bolkhov. The 112th Infantry and 12th Panzer Divisions were also brought in to carry out the mission, and anti-aircraft guns of caliber 8.8 smn self-propelled guns "Ferdinani" were placed at their disposal.

Our General Staff also closely monitored the situation at the Orlovsky bridgehead. It was here at this time that the interests of the opposing sides converged. As noted above, the operation "Kutuzov" went into that peak. To find a way out, the Soviet command urgently needed to analyze the course of the battles that took place simultaneously in four sectors of the Oryol ledge and make adjustments. The memoirs of General Shtemenko, Chief of the Operations Department of the General Staff of the Red Army, will help to understand the course of events of those days: "The offensive of the Bryansk Front developed relatively slowly, and five days later, on July 17, at a depth of 22 kilometers near the rear line along the Oleshnya River, it completely slowed down. Here side

1 llese O.E. Re ZsMasnit Ogeorep ip Zi ipa Atsriz! 1943 (VA-MA VN 26-26/85).

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whether the troops of the so-called Mtsensk enemy grouping, which constituted, as it were, a wedge between the main forces of the Western and Bryansk fronts. This wedge seriously complicates interfront interaction. It was especially difficult for the Bryansk Front, which was a kind of link in the system of three fronts. Advancing on Oryol from the east, he had to use his right flank, together with the troops of the Western Front, to crush the enemy near Bolkhov. At the same time, with the main forces, he was to assist the Central Front, which, on July 15, began to destroy the enemy in the Krom region. Forces razlvayvalis and gradually dried up. There was a threat of violating the plan to defeat the enemy near Orel. To overcome the crisis, the Bryansk Front needed help.

It is known that at that time General Panov's 1st Guards Tank Corps, which operated in the Oryol direction, was sent for resupplying (without leaving the Bryansk Front). And why? The answer to this question is given by the data in the table below.

LOSS OF TANKS IN THE 1st Guards. TANK CASE

FROM 13 TO JULY 25, 1943?. t

T | 1 Parts

Machine Brands | Otartfire | Aviation Total 34 guards. tp "Churchill" 8

— 8 | 15 guards brigade T-34 19 1 20 +6

guards. tbr IE 24 | 2 | 26 | 17th

Guards tbr | At 36 | 2 | 38 EE 1 AND VI

| 16 Guards brigade 8 - 8 her

17th guards. tbr vz | 6 19

Total | 118 | 13 131 |

1 Shtemenko S.M. General Staff during the war. Book. 1. - M.: Military Publishing House. 1985. Pp. 171.

? TsAMORF, f. 3399, op. 1, d. 33, l. 94.

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If we calculate the losses from the initial composition of the corps (about 200 tanks), then they amounted to 65 percent of the TOV.

On July 18, from the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command to the command of the commander of the Bryansk Front, Colonel-General M.M. Popov, the 3rd Panzer Army of General Rybalko is transferred, which should disrupt the stability of the enemy's defense in the offensive zone of the troops of the 3rd and 63rd armies and break through to Orel.

The General Staff and Stalin counted on the fact that with the introduction of the 3rd Panzer Army, the situation in the Oryol direction would change radically - quickly and in our favor. Did not work out. The Germans parried the blow in time, and already on July 23, in the battles on the banks of the Oleshnya and Optushka rivers, they halved the number of tanks of Rybalko's army.

DATA ON THE STRENGTH AND LOSSES OF THE 3rd TANK ARMY!

113546399

122 | 609%) | 68 | 11025%)

b-ytgv.tk | 10170_ | 3738 (36%) | 7th tv.tk,
9478 (2493048) | 6 | 6406%) | 51 39769) | 1-Jan | 1130 [2098.59 | 42
| 928%) | 27 | 8438) |

yy

15 175 164 _|76(46.5%)| 57

| | 11213 |

| 39344 28.5% |

397 |209 62 203 |100 (49%)

Notes.

1) The rank of Guards was awarded to the 3rd Tank Army on July 26, 1943.

2) The army suffered losses mainly in battles from July 19 to July 23 inclusive, after which it was withdrawn to the reserve of the Bryansk Front, and on July 28 transferred to the Central Front.

3) After replenishment, the combat strength of the tank army on July 28 was: tanks T-34-243, T-70-114, 122-mm self-propelled guns-27, guns - 200, mortars - 180, M-13 "Katyusha" - 8 ID.

1 TsAMO RF, f. 315 (Zgv.TA), op. 4444, d. 3, l. 76-82; d.5, l. 112.

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Help was needed not only for the Bryansk Front. Ivan Khristoforovich Bagramyan, using Stalin's patronage, periodically sought from him the allocation of people and tanks for his (1st Guards Army), which soon "evaporated." The General Staff monitored the situation on the fronts and, of course, was aware of what was happening General Sokolovsky on the left wing of the Western Front followed Genigtab's directive No. without proper support from combined arms formations, they fought heavy battles with the enemy in the area of Mavrino (Mymri no. - HER. Shch.), Gnezdilovo, Znamenskoye, Verkh. Rydan and, having suffered losses, in essence, went over to the defensive!"

The Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the spacecraft, General Antonov, believed that: "It would be advisable:

1. Direct the strike of the 11th army from the Ktsyn sector and to the south

on Khvastovichi, trying to reach the Karachev area as soon as possible.

2. The main efforts of the 11th Guards. armies to concentrate on the board of Khotynets, trying to quickly cut the railway. to the road and highway Orel - Bryansk.

3. Massively use tank corps in the direction of the main attack of the 11th Guards. armies, freeing them from defensive tasks. Please let me know about your events.

So, this document appeared as a result of a week-long trampling on the spot by Bagramyan's troops, who were assigned the leading role in the defeat of the Bolkhov and Khotynets, and then surrounded by the entire Oryol grouping of the enemy. The directive emphasized the actions of the 11th Guards Army only in the Khotynets direction (previously - in Bolkhovsky and Khotynets), with the aim of intercepting the only communication line; at the same time, recommendations were given on how to implement this: tank corps used

1 TsAMORF, f. 3, op. 11556, d. 13, l. 184. 2 Ibid., l. 185.

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to call massively in the direction of the main blow - to Khotynets.

But it was already too late. Here, at the head of the river Vytebet, a fresh 253rd infantry division first appeared in a relatively narrow neck, urgently transferred here from the Moscow direction (from the 4th army of G. Heinrici), and then a motorized "Great Germany" from under Belgorod (4th Panzer Army G. Gotha). The favorable moment of the encirclement of the Oryol grouping of the enemy was missed.

This was the moment when the only artery of Bryansk - Orel in the area of st. Khotynets was held for a whole day - July 19 - by the soldiers of the 162nd tank brigade. It was here that the 4th Panzer Army of Badanova was supposed to be at that time. But at that time she was only loading onto trains and heading from the Moscow region to the ancient Russian city of Kozelsk.

In my opinion, at that time it would have been necessary to send not the 4th, but the 3rd tank army of Rybalko here. In this place, already on July 14, a deep breakthrough of Baghrmian's troops was indicated. But in view of the fact that a deep dent was formed and the front of the 11th Guards Army almost tripled in a concave arc, and its forces were evenly "dispersed" over the 150-kilometer offensive sector, the movement to the south of the railway. highways stalled. Meanwhile, the 3rd Panzer Army was in the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme Command (Plavsk district). Her either under its own power, or along the railway line. highways from st.

Volovo through st. Gorbachevo and Belev could be quickly transferred to the Kozelsk area. And then she had the opportunity not to break through the defense, as happened in the sector of the Bryansk Front (along the Oleshnya River), but to enter the gap (Khotynets area) and develop an offensive to the south towards Rokossovsky's troops. And it should also be noted that the command staff of the 3rd Panzer Army was undoubtedly more experienced than in Badanov's 4th Panzer Army. More than half of the crews of Rybalko's tank crews had previously participated in battles. And this means a lot, especially during military operations deep behind enemy lines, in isolation from YOUR MAIN FORCES.

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Who is to blame for the fact that they did not notice the "zest" in time - the situation that developed at Khotynets (the interception of the Orel-Bryansk railway by the 162nd tank brigade). If I had used this chance, it would have become sweet, very sweet for all of us from the "second Stalingrad".

This is an omission, first of all, of the General Staff and the First Deputy Supreme Commander G.K. Zhukov. In the absence of Vasilevsky, the brilliant ngtabi player (as a result of the castling carried out by Stalin, he was sent far to the south to carry out the Mius offensive operation), his deputy General Antonov, receiving reports from the front (three times a day) and especially from Bagramyan, did not catch the moment when the Germans found themselves near Khotynets in a deep crisis. But it was precisely at this time, starting from July 14, when the bill went not for days, but for hours, he had to go to Stalin and prove the expediency of transferring Rybalko's army to the Khotynets direction, and not Oryol, where Iosif Vissarionovich personally aimed it.

And where was Comrade Zhukov at that time? After all, he was appointed by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command as the coordinator of the actions of the three fronts during the operation "Kutuzov". It is difficult to answer this question, but the main thing is that at the right moment, in the right place, he was not there. He appeared here when it was necessary to find the culprit of the huge losses suffered by Badanov's armored group in the Battle of Borilov. We will return to these events and consider them in detail, but for now we will follow how the fighting of the 25th tank corps of Major General F.G. Anikushin, whose formations were torn to Khotynets.

PROLOGUE OF THE BATTLE OF BORILOVO - REID
ON THE REAR OF THE ENEMY

25th Panzer Corps! for the time being, he was in the reserve of the Western Front, when suddenly on July 14, at 18.00, an encryption was received from the Military Council of the Western Front about the concentration of the corps by the morning of July 15 in the area of Slavyshino, Derevino, Dretovo, Aleshnya (upper river Mashok). Fulfilling

this order, the corps made an 18-kilometer night march.

Exactly a day later, Anikushin's tankers received a directive from the headquarters of the Western Front: by the morning of July 16, concentrate on the Kharevka, Shvanovo, Yagodnaya, and Athosovo districts (Ulyanovsk district, now Kaluga region).

The march took place in extremely difficult conditions due to the unpreparedness of the roads by the engineering units, which were clogged with rears of other units and formations.

On the morning of July 16, the corps received the task: "To act together from the 1st kutra on 17.07 to seize art. Khotynen, and then occupy the defense area with the Orel-Bolkhov front.

Tankers moved in two columns along the routes:

right: Shvanovo, Kamenka, Khomyakovo, Sharapovo, Zhdimir, Moschenoe, Hotynets;

left: Berry, Gorodok, Stolbchee, Dolbilovo, Lokno, Selikhovo, Sorokino, Kr. Ryabinki, Cr. Nov.

Having embarked on the task, the corps had absolutely no operational orientation about suitable formations of the enemy grouping.

1 Composition of the corps: 111, 162, 175th brigade and 20th motorized brigade; 53 mtsb, 1497 iptap, 459 mini, 746 iptdn, 1702 zenap.

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Making a heavy night march through a wooded area, the lead brigades of the corps, leaving the forests southeast of the river. Vytebet, early in the morning! July 7, they came into contact with the enemy and were forced to fight with the head battalions in the area of Gorodok, Koptevo in clearly unfavorable conditions, not being able to deploy the main combat forces - brigades.

Despite this, Anikushin's tankers, having broken the resistance of the enemy, left the forests and continued their march in the afternoon, trying to capture the station. Hotynen. On the evening of July 18, when the lead battalion of the 162nd Tank Brigade reached the Lokno settlement, the corps formations received a flank attack from the enemy from the east and southeast with a force of up to three motorized regiments, supported by 50-60 tanks and up to 10 self-propelled guns. The blow fell on the tail of the 162nd, the head of the 175th tank and the left flank of the 20th motorized rifle brigades.

From the "Information on the combat path of the 162nd Novograd-Volyn order of the Kutuzov tank brigade (25 mk) for the period from 5.06.42 to 10.08.43":

"At 8 pm on July 14, the 162nd Tank Brigade of Colonel I.A. Volyntsa was raised on combat alert. Having received for the dacha: as part of the 25th Panzer Corps, make a 140-km march and concentrate in the Minin-Popov region, be ready for an attack on Khotynen.

On July 16, the brigade headquarters received an order: "Advance in the direction: Yagodnaya, Gorodok, Vyazovaya, Stolbchee, Gorki, Kuzminka, Lokno, elev. 220.7; 231.8; 235.0; 223.7, Krasnye Ryabinki, Krasnaya Nov with the task: to cut the railway. Orel - Bryansk and go on the defensive in the district: Kr. Nov, Cheerful Island, Kr. Niva, hold the area until the infantry approaches.

July 16, at 20:00, the brigade went on the offensive. Shooting down the defending enemy groups with the main forces, the formation continued to move towards Khotynets. Nevertheless, the rest of the units turned around to repel the enemy's counterattack and were forced to engage in a heavy battle, and then repel continuous counterattacks for four days.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3228, op. 1, d. 1, l. 3, 3 (rev.).

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enemy (lo 10-12 times a day), which made it impossible for all other formations of the corps to break through to the railroad.

1st Tank Corps Lieutenant General V.V. Butkova at that time was pinned down and also could not move south.

Thus, on July 19, only the 162nd tank brigade broke through to the Khotynna region, which interrupted the railway traffic here and, having captured the Khotynets station, took up all-round defense.

On July 18, at 20:00, as the brigade reached the Sharapovo-Lokno line, the brigade received a flank attack from two infantry regiments of the 293rd Infantry Division and 50 tanks from the 9th Infantry Division. The enemy struck at the tail of the column and cut off part of the units and the rear. The main forces of the brigade, without getting involved in battle, boldly and decisively, despite the exit of large enemy forces to their rear, continued to carry out the task; with the exit, the enemy reared up with counterattacks of tanks and infantry, repeatedly trying to upset the battle formation of the brigade and stop its advance. At the same time, the transmitter of the radio station was disabled, and the brigade was left without communication with the corps.

Three tanks with landing troops captured st. Khotynen, and during the day a brave group of Soviet tankers and machine gunners, repelling enemy attacks, held the station. Acting from ambushes along the main roads feeding the front, the brigade destroyed passing enemy vehicles and columns.

The appearance of the brigade in the operational depth of the enemy's defense caused panic among the German troops and the local Hitlerite authorities. Data on the actions of Soviet tanks in the Khotynna region caused an increased evacuation of the wounded and armament of troops, explosions of industrial enterprises and railway workshops in the Orel region, and with the restoration of traffic along the steel line, the German command continued the evacuation of the rear.

According to local residents, the Germans said that a large tank army was operating behind their lines, with up to 350 tanks.

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To liquidate the brigade, the German command gathered forces from Orel and Karachev, and also subjected the area occupied by the brigade to air bombing. Despite this, the brigade, evading the battle with the main enemy forces, delivered blows to him.

"During July 19, 20, 21, waging tense battles, without communication with the headquarters of the corps, having ammunition and fuel running out, the remnants of the brigade broke through the enemy's defenses in the Khomyakovo region for the second time and on the morning of July 22 connected with parts of the corps. During operations in the rear, the brigade repulsed a number of violent attacks by large enemy forces. So, for example, on July 19, in the area of Krasnaya Nov, she repelled six counterattacks by an infantry regiment with tanks and artillery, supported by fire from an armored train and bombing by aircraft. It should be taken into account that during the raid the commander of the brigade, Colonel Volynets, and his deputy for political affairs of the Guard, Lieutenant Colonel Syropyatov, were seriously wounded.

A characteristic feature of the fighting in the Oryol operation is the mass heroism of the fighters, commanders and political workers. People fought to the last breath, but did not surrender alive to the enemy.

For example, the senior assistant to the chief of staff for special communications captain Pospelov (aka the party organizer of the brigade headquarters) on July 22 with a group of fighters and commanders in the amount of 9 people, performing a combat mission on a T-70 tank, the Red Ryabinki military party ran into a German ambush - an unequal the battle. The tank hit a mine and could not move further. Shooting back to the last bullet, many died the death of the brave. Junior Lieutenant Chupakhin fought back with grenades. When the grenades ran out, in order not to be taken prisoner, he blew himself up with the last grenade. Captain Pospelov, being wounded, could not hold a weapon in his hands and began to tear with his teeth a German officer who was trying to take him prisoner. Having met fierce resistance, the Germans finished off the captain.

Returning from the raid, the T-34 tank stopped due to a technical malfunction near Lokna. A group of Germans began to surround the tank and fire at it. The crew of the tank and paratroopers

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ki returned fire. When the tank ran out of ammunition, the crew blew it up and crawled into the rye with a group of paratroopers. The Germans attacked a group of brave soldiers and commanders up to an infantry company. Having let them in at close range, the machine gunner Krasnokutsky opened destructive fire from his machine gun. The surviving Germans hastily retreated. The second attack of the enemy infantry was supported by a tank, but this time the Nazis were unable to break the resistance of a small handful of brave brave men. The unequal battle lasted until night. As a result, the commander of the machine-gun platoon, Lieutenant Yakovlev, foreman Popov, Sergeant Tarasov, and the Red Army soldier Morozov heroically logged. Only Krasnokutsky survived. Having shot all the cartridges, he buried his machine gun and for six days, eating only rye, made his way to his own.

The commander of the 2nd Tank Battalion, Captain Panteleev, the commander of the 2nd Company of the 1st Tank Battalion, Lieutenant Zagorodnikov, and a number of other combatants and commanders died a heroic death behind enemy lines!

zhzhzh

While working with archival materials of tank formations, a letter from Volynets addressed to an unknown colonel general was discovered. The former commander of the 162nd Tank Brigade gave a detailed account of the course and results of the tankers' raid on the rear of the enemy in the area of the Khotynenp station. This laconic document deserves to be reproduced without abridgements in the pages of a book.

"Hello, Comrade Colonel General!?

After a severe cranial wound in July of this year, I have only now recovered somewhat and decided to turn to you.

The fact is that 162 brigade 25 mk for a successful raid

: TsAMORF, f. 3228, op. 1, d.1, l.3.3 (0b.).

? Most likely, this letter was addressed to the commander of the armored and mechanized troops of the KA comrade. Fedorenko.

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enemy from 18 to 22.07.43 in the Oryol operation was

promoted to the rank of guards. The fate of this performance is unknown to me as the former commander of this brigade. I'm worried that the performance might be forgotten and the crew left unmarked.

On the night of July 17 to July 18, 1943, the 162nd brigade was tasked with following from the Gorodok district (30 km west of Bolkhov) the Krutitskie Khutor district, to enter the gap at the Krasnikovo, Kuzminka, Lokno area and, providing the left flank of the marching corps, cut the railway. Bryansk - Orel 7 km S.-E. Hotynen.

The situation was as follows: on the eve of July 17, the brigade was subjected to air bombardment all day. At least 700-800 sorties were made by the enemy in the area where the brigade was located and 107th Rifle Division.

On July 17, the brigade lost 13 vehicles and 6 out of 9 anti-aircraft crews from air bombs. From the morning of July 18, 1943, until the evening of the 25th wound, at least 1000 sorties were made by the enemy. The ground enemy rushed forward with the aim of driving the corps back into the swampy forests to the north.

By 15.00 on 18.07 the reconnaissance of the brigade established that the direction of Krasnikovo, Kuzminka, Lokno was weakly covered by the enemy. East of Kuzminka, in a 3 km hollow, the enemy concentrated 70 tanks and south-west. Kuzminka - up to 30 "tigers".

At 15.30, the deputy commander of the 25th Corps of the Guards, Colonel Eliseev, hurried me into the breach. Exactly at 16.00, the brigade moved into a breakthrough in the direction of Krasnikovo, Kuzminka, Lokno, Kr. Ryabinki, Cr. Nov in the following order of march: reconnaissance - 5 T-34 tanks at the head of the head of the reconnaissance unit. Head outpost 5 T-70 tanks and side - left 5 T-70 and right 3 T-70. In the column of the main forces: 1 TB, 45-mm battery on the "jeeps", 2nd tank battalion, 76-mm anti-tank battery, mortar company. The motorized rifle battalion and the PTR company were on tanks of the 1st and 2nd tank battalions as tank landing forces. Operational group of brigade headquarters and radio operator.

At 16:00, the brigade moved into the gap, encountering weak resistance from anti-tank gunners and several submachine gunners along the Kras

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Nikovo, Kuzminka, Lokno. This resistance was suppressed by the guns of tanks from the marching column.

At 16.40, the brigade reached Lokno, passing 2 km behind the rear of the pr-ka and avoiding a collision with the tanks of the pr-ka, which were nearby, on both flanks of the brigade. Upon reaching Lokno was abandoned ! a tank with a tank landing in Lokno to guard the bridge until the approach of the 175 brigade following behind. 162 brigade by 17.00 left the area of Four Graves 4 km south-west. Lokno on a big good road. At that moment, up to 200 bombers from the avenue followed from the south, accompanied by Messerschmitts in

direction Kuzminka, Koptevo to the north. Seeing the danger of being destroyed by aircraft, I fired 3 white rockets up, i.e. identified himself with a German signal, communicated to me the day before by the commander of the 25th TC. 10 "Messers" immediately separated from this air group and accompanied us until dusk, guarding us from the air. The road was exceptionally good. The column of the main forces of the brigade developed a speed of 40-45 km, as a result of which it was greatly stretched and raised dust above itself. As a result of this, the inhabitants, who saw the passage of the column, assured that our column was no less than 150-200 tanks. This information obviously became known to the pr-ku and later played a positive role.

Upon reaching Podvalievo, the brigade column was fired from there by 2 artillery batteries and 1-1.5 infantry companies. Having 10 Messers above me and following on the lead tank, I did not dare to turn to Podvalievo to attack the avenue and ordered the battalions to increase their speed in the same direction along the road, to fire all tank guns to the left on Podvalievo.

That. the brigade column defeated in Podvalievo, without revealing itself in the eyes of the German fighter escorts from the air, therefore, without giving a reason to call the bombers of the pr-ka to the brigade column.

It would be possible to tell a lot of interesting things about this raid, I'm not afraid to take your attention for a long time. I have to dwell only on the results of this raid. In general, 162 brigade fought with the enemy in the rear for 4 days from 18 to 22.07 and on the night of 21 to 22.07 with a night attack in

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in the same place where it entered the breach, exited it, achieving the following results:

1. Fights destroyed:

a) infantry in the region of Kr. Nov, 7 km S.-E. Khotynets up to 600 people, in other places up to 200 people;

6) armored train - 1, guns up to 3 batteries; more than 50 cars were hit;

c) tanks, incl. "Tiger", vr-not railway 13 pcs., vr-not Lokno, Kuzminka when returning from the raid 8 pcs., 1 general was killed - commander of the 29th infantry division. (Clarification is required, probably, this is the commander of the 129th infantry division - E. Shch.)

2. Railway dismantled. Bryansk - Eagle at 500 m.

3. Telegraph wires were torn, and telegraph poles were knocked down by tanks in several places on the railway.

4. The German headquarters of the Oryol Front in a panic flew off by plane to Gomel.

5. The Znamenskoye vr-n pulled out from under Kursk is more than 3-htd and not less than 3 pd for the protection of the railway. Bryansk - Orel. (In fact, ten different German divisions were transferred here from different sectors of the Soviet-German front, including from near Belgorod. Around Kursk, within a radius of 90 km, there were no German, as well as Soviet, divisions due to the fact that no combat operations were conducted in this area at all. All battles at that moment were taking place on the territory of the Orlovsky bridgehead, as well as in the south - at the turn of the Mius River. - E. Shch.)

6. The Germans destroyed all the depots and other structures at the stations from Orel to Khotynets.

7. All the elders, policemen and Gestapo fled in the vicinity of the raid and more until the arrival of our troops did not gather foxes.

8. According to the inhabitants of the city of Orel, on July 20, German officers began to shoot in Orel, saying that "the Russian tank army broke through to Bryansk and we will have a" second Stalin trawl ".

The state of the brigade after returning from the raid:

1. The brigade commander and his deputy were seriously wounded. on the political side. Killed nachoperchasti, nachsvyaz, chief of cipher department and commander of 2 16th.

2. Remaining in the brigade at 12.00 22.07:24 corrected. tanks, of which

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ZT-70 and 211-34, motorized infantry 60%, or 350 people, in full force min. company and brigade anti-tank battery.

3. Losses of the brigade in the raid: tanks - 33, killed, wounded and PBV - about 120 people.

I ask for your petition to the People's Commissar of Defense for the assignment of the rank of guards to the 162 brigade. (Probably, due to the heavy losses that Badanov's armored strike group suffered in the Borilovsky battle, none of the corps, as well as not a single brigade, was awarded the rank of guards. - Yo. Shch.)

Deputy commander of the 25th TC for the combat unit, Colonel Volynets.

In the "Information on the combat path of the 162nd tank brigade for the period from 06/05/42 to 08/10. 43" raid results data corrected:

"By fighting behind enemy lines, the brigade inflicted the following losses on him:

killed soldiers and officers - up to 70 people,

taken prisoner, then shot - 194 people,

headquarters destroyed - 4,

tanks destroyed - 11 (including T-6 - 4 pcs.),

armored vehicles - 6,

cars - 95,

guns - 21,

minibatteries - 5,

aircraft M-PO - 1.

7 km of tracks were blown up.

23.07. 43, the brigade as part of the corps again entered into hostilities.

Commander of the 25th TC Major General of the Tank Troops
Anishkin

Chief of Staff Colonel Voronchenko?

1 TsAMORF, f. 3228, op. 1, d. 1, l.7--8. Note. At the end
of July 1943, upon returning from the hospital, Colonel Volynets was appointed deputy
commander of the 25th TC for combat
parts

? TsAMOEf, f. 3228, op. 1, d.1, l.4.

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The experience of the Great Patriotic War shows that the first and most important condition for conducting and successfully completing an operation is delivering a powerful surprise strike against the enemy. Only such a blow could quickly crush the enemy's tactical defense zone, inflict heavy losses on him and create conditions for the rapid development of the operation in depth and to the flanks.

Analyzing the combat operations of Bagramyan's strike group of troops, it should be recognized that the troops of the 11th Guards Army delivered a sudden and crushing blow to the enemy troops, which fell mainly at the junction of the defense sector of the 211th and 293rd infantry divisions. And in fact, the tactical defense of the enemy in the Glinnaya-Ozhigovo breakthrough sector was completely destroyed, our troops rushed to the south. But, calculating the general plan of the operation,

Our command and, most importantly, the Operations Department of the General Staff did not take into account two very important points. Firstly, the enemy defense system at the Orlovsky bridgehead was created on the principle of nodes of resistance located in the depths of defense (they became large settlements, in this case Ulyanovo, Kireykovo, Sorokino, Krapivna, Yagodny, Ukolitsa, etc.), and as well as strongholds located at command heights.

Secondly, the fact that the German command had reserves at some distance from the front line was not taken into account. And these reserves, having greater mobility than ours, moving quickly, turned out to be at local places of breakthrough, parrying blows. As a result, Bagramyan's strike force did not create conditions for the rapid development of the operation in depth and towards the flanks, and the operation took on a protracted and bloody character. Three tank corps were not enough for a rapid advance to the south of Khotyntsa. Their forces were scattered in two directions. And besides, the tank corps, getting involved in the assault and overcoming the key and strong points, lost precious time. Germans would

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Strictly and resolutely undertaking countermeasures, they transferred large reserves to the north-west of Bolkhov and stopped the well-launched offensive of our troops.

THE DAY BEFORE THE BATTLE

Any operation includes activities carried out by the command, headquarters at all levels and troops. The most important were the following: making a decision and setting tasks for the troops; operation planning; organization of reconnaissance of all types, management and interaction between military branches; regrouping of troops and starting positions for the offensive; combat, political and operational training of command, staffs and troops; operational support of the operation, etc.

Preparations for the operation to bring the 4th Panzer Army into the gap were carried out in accordance with the task set by the Headquarters of the Supreme Command and the corresponding decision of the commander of the troops of the Western Front, the available time and the possibilities of material support for the troops.

Fulfilling the directives of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, Badanov's army "by the end of 23.7 concentrated: 6 MK - Bolshaya Sloboda, Gutnevo, Pokrovka, Gordikovo, Kireevskoye, Khryapkino, 11 TK - Alymovsky, Slagovishchi, high. 179, 3, Dmitrovsky. 30 shopping mall - Sosenski, high. 198, 4, 209, 4, south. near the district of Stenisha, Kozelsk.

After the concentration of the army troops passed into submission

command of the Western Front and relocated to a waiting area.

Having made 60 km Mari, at 24.00 24.7 4 TA took a position
nie:

ITK - Zhanovo, Podlesnaya, Svoboda, Yagodnaya.

30 TK. - Seredichi, forest 3 km north. (suit.) Chekryak.

6 Guards. MK - Peredel, Kireykovo, Shpilevo "I.

Upon careful study of command documents

1 TsAMORF, f. 4 tv.TA, op. 4756, d. 12, l. 5.

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The Western Front and the 4th Panzer Army pay attention to the difference in the orders for the offensive, which concerned the place where Badanov's army entered the breakthrough and the direction of the strike. In particular, the Military Council of the Western Front set a task for the army: on the morning of July 26, "to enter the gap in the sector of the 8th Guards. SC 11 tv. And, with a blow in the south-western direction, cut the main communications of the enemy in the area of Khotynets and kiskhodu on 26.7.43, go to the area: Krasnaya Polyana, Khotynets, Mayaki, Oboleshevo, Bogdanovka, Naryshkino, Bykovo, Bunino, creating conditions for the encirclement of the Oryol- Bolkhov grouping of the enemy!

In accordance with the order of the front commander and the operation plan, the commander of the 4th tank army, Lieutenant General V.M. Badanov, by his order, set the following task for the troops:

"TK enter the breakthrough and act in the band: on the right is Small. Krasnikovo (claim), Khotetovo, Korobetskaya (claim), Studenka (claim), Abolmasovo. On the left - Novoiginsky, Vasilyevsky, Lokna, Bol. Ryabinki - all points exclusively - and at the end of the day reach the area of Konevka, Mayaki, Bazdravo, Savinki, having a reinforced detachment at the Khotkovo-Skolenko line.

bgv. MK - enter the gap and operate in the lane: on the right is the border with 11 TK, on the left - Plaschanskoe (claim.), Luchki, (claim.) Dulebina, (claim.) Sukhachevo, and by the end of 26.7 go to the area: Kvasovo, Oboleshevo, Bogdanovka, Naryshkino.

5 TC move to 11 TC in readiness for action because of its right flank and by the end of 26.7.43 go to the area: Krasnaya Polyana, Khotynets, Gremyachiy, Dubrovo.

30 TK - move for 6 guards. MK is ready to act from behind its left flank and reach the area by the end of the day: Bolshie Ryabinki, Krasn. Ryabinki, Babinovo, Bunino.

Reserve: 30 TBR, 1545 TSAP, 51 OMCP, 51 armored battalions - move behind 6 guards. MK"2.

As you can see, the main forces of the 4th Panzer Army,

1 Ibid. ?

TsAMORF, f. 4gv.TA, op. 4756, d. 12, l.7-8.

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designated for entry into the gap (which was to be carried out by formations of the 8th Guards Rifle Corps), they advanced not in the south-western direction on Khotynets, but in the south-eastern direction - bypassing the enemy's strong Khotynets defense center with access to communications enemy in the Shakhovo-Naryshkino sector.

This decision of General Badanov was justified, because 10 km north-west of the Khotynets-Karachev communications sector, covering it, they had already taken up their positions of the formation of the Schmal group (Grossdeutschland divisions, 208th, 253rd, tank and artillery reinforcement units).

The attack of Badanov's armored group in the direction of Shakhovo had two goals:

first, the threat of a counterattack in the western direction from the side of the tank-mechanized group Garpe was eliminated;

the second - with a strike in a southerly direction with access to the deep rear of the enemy, with the interception of communications in the Naryshkino - Shakhovo area, the entire Oryol grouping of the enemy was cut off, and subject to a successful offensive from south to north by the forces of the 2nd and 3rd Soviet tank armies, it closed in a ring.

When choosing the place for the strike of Badanov's group in the General Staff, the officers of the operational department probably offered another option - the place of the greatest advance of the troops of the 11th Guards Army of Baghramyan: the Ilyinskoye - Judre - Alekhino section. From here, the railway was only a few kilometers away. A powerful blow - and the road is intercepted. But this option was rejected.

First, because this sector had already been blocked by the Grossdeutschland division, reinforced by the 51st Panther Heavy Tank Regiment.

Secondly, a blow in this place would only play into the hands of him. A breakthrough into the deep rear of the enemy, without providing the flanks with the bloodless divisions of the 11th Guards Army, endangered the complete encirclement of the 4th Tank Army. She herself drove herself into the "boiler". A concentrated strike in a western direction concentrated in one

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In the bottleneck of the forces of the Harpe group, it cut off from the main forces and you the army of Badanov, which, undoubtedly, would have been attacked from the front by the powerful armored forces of the Schmal group. In this case, Badanov's group would have been surrounded and completely destroyed. By that time, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command had no reserves to save her - they were already completely exhausted.

That is why a section of the front was chosen 17 km west of Bolkhov. Here, on the site of densely located ancient Russian settlements, a gigantic, hitherto unseen battle unfolded, in which 1362 units of mobile armored vehicles (tanks and self-propelled guns) of the latest systems took part on both sides. Such a concentration of armored vehicles on one kilometer of the front (80 units) has not yet been achieved anywhere, even on July 12, 1943 near Prokhorovka.

The 4th tank army of General Badanov, reinforced by the 5th and 25th tank corps, was advancing. The German Harpe group, as already noted, was in deep defense. It occupied a 17-kilometer section of the front, passing through the dominating heights 5-7 km west of the Negr River.

6th Guards Mechanized Corps

The time of the beginning of the offensive, the direction of the main attack and the zone of action of the corps were made dependent on the success of the formations of the 8th Rifle Corps. The location of his headquarters and the headquarters of his divisions was not precisely known. Information about the enemy was very scarce - only about the outlines of his front line.

From the "Report on the combat operations of the 6th Guards Mech Corps from 26.07 to 10.08.43":

"To accomplish the task, it was necessary:

- a) clarify the task of the 8th brigade and its divisions;
- 6) to carry out commander's reconnaissance of the front line of the enemy's defense and the starting position for the offensive;
- c) organize a twenty-kilometer march and withdraw

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corps to the original area during the night on one road, allowing only one-way traffic.

To solve these problems, the corps had 10-12 hours,

of which 3 hours of daylight. During the remaining daylight hours, it was not possible to carry out command reconnaissance and coordinate actions with the commander of the 8th Rifle Corps, and these issues were resolved from the morning of July 26, i.e. on the day of the outbreak of hostilities!

In addition to three brigades, the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps also included the 29th Guards, 56th Separate Tank Regiments and the 1st Guards Self-Propelled Artillery Regiment.

"25.6.43, 29 dep. guards the tank regiment was relocated to the city of Zagorsk, where it was placed at the disposal of the commander of the battalion of the Guards. MK.

On July 20, 1943, the regiment, with 510 personnel, 32 kaT-34 tanks and 1Yu T-70 tanks, arrived by rail at the unloading area of Belev, from where it marched and concentrated in the area with. Suryanino.

In the period from 25.7 to 12.8.43, the regiment, consisting of 6 guards. MK fought in the Oryol direction"2.

11th Panzer Corps

On July 25, after receiving an oral preliminary order from the commander of the 4th Tank Army, General Badanov, at 6 o'clock in the morning, the headquarters of the 11th Tank Corps, together with the commanders of units and formations, began reconnaissance of routes to reach the area of starting positions, areas of starting positions, approaches to the front line, as well as linking interaction with units of the 8th Guards Rifle Corps.

There was extremely little time to work out all the issues of joint operations with the infantry and artillery - only one day. Reconnaissance of directions

1 TsAMORF, f. 3434 (btv. mk), op. 1, d. 2, l. 5. ? There, f. 117 (29 guards detachment), he. 480524 s, d. 1, l. 1.

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a group of platoon commanders, vehicles and driver-mechanics was not carried out at all. Immediately after choosing the area of starting positions, the units began to occupy it, marching during the day, in small groups. On July 25, by 10 p.m., the corps in full strength concentrated in the initial area - the Krutitsy settlement. Parts of the 5th tank corps were also located here.

Filed by rifle units that had contact with the enemy (26th and 83rd rifle divisions), in the area of \u200b\u200bwhich the corps was to attack, units of the 18th and 20th German tank divisions defended in front of them. During the week

In the course of the confrontation, the enemy managed to secure and turn settlements into strongholds of resistance: Khomyakovo, Bulgakovo Shemyakina, Gorki, Vetrovo, vys. 232.1, Lunevo.

The area in front of the leading edge is open. Command heights, including the dominant one - high. 232.1, were in the hands of the enemy, and all the approaches to its front edge were visible and were under the influence of artillery MINOR.

Accurate information about the fire system and the location of the enemy's firing points, at least on the front line, was not available. By the beginning of the offensive, the corps did not receive reconnaissance reports from the army headquarters. Due to lack of time, its intelligence directed forward could not give detailed data about
tivnik and terrain.

Before the start of the offensive, heavy rains fell, which made the roads impassable for wheeled vehicles, and large traffic jams formed in the beams.

The sapper battalion was engaged in the repair of roads, but due to their great length, it was not able to provide normal traffic.

So, the corps reached the area of concentration in time and went to the area of starting positions. However, there was clearly not enough time to prepare for the offensive and work out all the issues of interaction, as well as to study the nature and system of the enemy's defense.

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BEFORE THE OFFENSIVE, THE CORPS HAD THE FOLLOWING
COMPATIBLE COMPOSITION

T-34 tanks
T-70 tanks
SU-122
Armored
transport
porters 5 Armored vehicles 47 47 — — —

30th Ural Volunteer Tank Corps

It should be noted that the 30th UDTK entered combat operations a day later.

On the night of July 26-27, formations and units of the Ural Corps moved to the initial area to enter the breakthrough, but due to the fact that the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps did not make a breakthrough, on July 27 at 16.30 an order was received: "to overtake the 6th Guards. MK and attack on his site!

In view of the fact that a mechanized corps was operating ahead, the reconnaissance units of the Ural Corps (88th motorcycle and 64th armored vehicle battalions) did not conduct reconnaissance in force.

Information about the enemy came from active units and as a result of observation.

On the basis of a verbal order from the commander of the 4th Panzer Army, the formations and units of the corps were given a combat order to be ready to march from 06:00 on 07/24/1943 to the Pesochenka area, Sorokino.

At 17.00 on July 24, 1943, the corps commander, General Rodin, gave combat order No. 4:

"1. ZOTK from 24.00 07.24.43 performs and by 04.00 07.26.43 goes to the waiting area.

2. March to make two routes:

1 TsAMO RF, f. 30 UDTK, op. 1, d. 34, l. 2.

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Right: the town of Kireevskoye, Chernyshino, Veyno, Gryn, Sorokino, Ukolitsy.

Left: Krasny Klin, Kalinovka, Karachevo, Berezovo, Bolyshak, Kstishche, Vyazovka, Retyun, Grynskie Dvory, Monovsky, zap. env. Kireykov, Leninskoye.

During 07/25-26/1943, the corps made a march and concentrated in a waiting area, then during 07/26/1943 it was redeployed to the initial area to enter the breakthrough: Novoselka, Plaschanskoye, (claim.) Gnezdilovo, Seredichi and the forest to the north .

The 243rd and 244th tank brigades, which were the last to leave the concentration area after unloading, did not occupy the waiting area, but were immediately sent to the initial area.

By order of the commander of the formation and part of the corps, on the night of July 27, they moved from the waiting area to the front edge and "by 8.00 concentrated:

a) 243 brigade from 1513 iptap and 1621 sap - Novoselki, Igino and forest sowing. Novoselki;

6) 244 brigade - Ivanovsky;

c) 197 tbrs 742 iptd - Plaschanskoye, Aleksashinsky;

d) 30 MSBRs 299 minp - Morozovsky, Budyonnovsky, Gremuchy.

30 MSBRr, due to the shortage of wheeled vehicles, made the transition on foot.

Due to the fact that the roads were broken after heavy rains, a lot of fuel was used up in the formations and units for the transition.

On average, about 0.25 fillings remained in the hull. From the starting areas, on the orders of the corps commander, the commanders of formations and units organized reconnaissance of routes to the front line and the front line.

25th Panzer Corps

The combat order of the corps headquarters No. 008 / he of July 25 ordered the units and subunits: "to be ready for combat operations from the morning of 07/26/43" ?.

1 TsAMORF, f. 10tv. tk, op. 1, d. 34, l. 2, 2 (0b.). 2 Ibid., l. 16.

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The 162nd tank brigade, after returning from a raid behind enemy lines (as of July 22, had 21 tanks T-34, 3 - T-70, 350 motorized infantry, a mortar company and an anti-tank battery) was on vacation and was understaffed with personnel and equipment.

The tank and motorized rifle battalions of the 175th tank brigade were at their starting positions: 500 m bush Yurkovskiy, conducting reconnaissance in the direction: Uzkoye, Pervomayskoye, crossings over the Gryazny stream in the Annikovo, Vysokoye section.

On July 27, order No. 009 / op was received: "The brigade from the 20th Motorized Rifle Brigade, 459 MP, be ready to advance in the morning of July 28 in the direction: Pervomaisky, Lazinka, elev. high 201.3, master the sowing. env. Znamenskoye and hold it.

On 27.07 at 20.00, a preliminary order from the shtakor 25 was received: to be ready for action by 4.00 on 28.07.1943 " ?.

Nothing is known about the condition of the 111th tank brigade, since the archive documents have not been received.

In general, the 25th Panzer, together with the 8th Guards Corps, were on July 26 at the lines that they had reached on July 23, and, repulsing enemy counterattacks, they did not advance further due to heavy losses.

5th Panzer Corps

The 24th tank brigade was located in the area of the settlement of Stolbchee.

On July 22-26, 1943, by order of the commander of the commander, the 41st tank brigade was in the area of the Dvoriki settlement with the task of "replenishing materiel and personnel, bringing units and subunits to combat readiness.

On 25.07 the brigade had: 928 people. personnel; tanks: MK-3 - 10, T-34 - 46, T-70-6, T-60-8 "3.

As of July 26, the 70th tank brigade included: T-34 tanks - 5, M4-A-2 - 29, MK-3-19. In the report on the combat and numerical strength for July 26, it was noted that "On 26.07 the crews were poorly trained, they fired poorly."

1 Ibid., op. 1, d. 1, L. 8.

e Ibid., l. 17.

3 TsAMO RF, f. 41 brigade, op. 1, d. 12, l. 364, 371. 4 Ibid., f. 70 brigade, op. 1, d. 12, l. 243.

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On the night of July 24 to July 25, the 5th motorized rifle brigade was withdrawn to the forest area 500 m west. Krutitsky.

By this time, the combat and strength of the brigade: "shooters and machine gunners - 180 people, PTR shooters - 65, machine gunners - 148, mortarmen - 175, artillerymen - 154 people.

<...>

28.07. At 19.00, an order was received to speak in the district of Krutitsky, Yachnoye, Yachny, Stolbchee, in the outgoing. district - the ravines of V. Stolbchee and, on a signal, go on the offensive behind the tanks of the 24th brigade "".

Thus, the formations of the tank group of General Badanov took up their starting lines (some from the morning of the 26th, others at dawn on July 27) and waited for a signal to go on the offensive.

1 TsAMORF, f. 5 MSBR, op. 1, d.4, l. 43-50.

CHRONOLOGY
BORILOVO BATTLE

ORDER GIVEN

In accordance with the order of the Military Council of the Western

front, the command of the 4th Panzer Army "developed the following plan of operation:

a) The TC enters the gap in the Ivlevo, Shemyakino sector and by the end of the first day of the operation, it enters the Konevka, Savenki area, having a bo [combat guard] Khotkovo, Konevka.

5 TC moves behind 11 TC and by the end of the day goes to the Khotynets area.

6) bgv. MK enters a breakthrough in the area: Shemyakino (claim.), Luchki and by the end of the first day of the operation enters the area: Kvasovo, Naryshkino.

ZOTK moves for 6 Guards. MK and by the end of the day goes to paradise on Bol. Ryabinki, Babinovo "".

Fulfilling the directive instructions of the command, the troops of Badanov's army "again on 25 July 26 made a 25-kilometer march and at 11.00 on 26.07 took their starting position: 11 TK - Reutovo, Lipovka, forest 3 km north-east. Krutitsa. bgv. MK - Tsukanovsky, Kudinovsky, Morozovsky, Rodomka.

30 TC was left in the former area in readiness to advance behind the B Guards. MK, to develop his success. Army units - So rokino.

Army Headquarters - Kireykovo "?.

1 TsAMORF, f. 4th Guards TA, op. 4756, d. 12, l.6. 2 Ibid.

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After the order of the front commander General Sokolovsky and agreed by all authorities, up to the General Staff of the spacecraft, the plan of operation, Lieutenant General V.M. On July 25, Badanov set the following task for his formations:

"NP TK enter the gap and operate in the lane on the right of Smol. [okurnya] Krasnikovo, (claim.) Khotetovo, Korobetskoye, (claim.) Studenka, (claim.) Abolmasovo. On the left - Novoiginsky, Vasilyevsky, Lokno, Bol. Ryabinki - all points exclusively and by the end of the day reach the Konevka, Mayaki, Bazdrevo, Savenki area, having a reinforced detachment at the Khotkovo-Skolenko line.

b Guards. MK - enter the breakthrough and act in the band:

on the right is the border with 11 shopping malls,

on the left - Plaschanskoye, (claim.) Luchki, (claim.) Dulebino, (claim.) Sukhochev, and by the end of July 26, go to the area: Kvasovo, Obolshchevo, Bogdanovka, Naryshkino.

5 TK move behind 11 TK in readiness for action because of his

right flank and by the end of July 26, 1943, reach the area: Krasnaya Polyana, Khotynets, Gremyachy, Dubrovo.

30 TK - move for 6 guards. MK is ready to act from behind the left flank and reach the area by the end of the day: Bol. Rya binki, Red. Ryabinki, Babinovo, Bunino.

Reserve: 30 MSBR, 1545 TSAP, 51 OMCG, 51 armored battalions - move behind 6 Guards. MK'.

The situation at the beginning of the operation

As follows from the document stored in the archive: "The enemy, fearing the encirclement of his Oryol grouping, hastily transfers the most combat-ready troops from other sectors of the front to the Bolkhov region. In the period from 12 to 26.07 arrived here:

from the Belgorod direction of the TD SS "Great Germany",

from the Yartsevo direction 253rd PD,

from the Orel-Kursk direction 10 MD, 9 and 20TD.

Thus, in the offensive zone of 4 TA with a length of 17 km, the enemy grouping was as follows:

1 TsAMORF, f. 4th Guards TA, op. 4756, d. 12, l. 7-8. ? "Abstracts of the report of the commander of the 4th Guards Tank Army Guards Colonel-General Lelyushenko on the military operations of the 4th TA West

leg and Bryansk fronts in the Oryol operation from 26.7 to 28.8.43" (see TsAMO RF, f. 4gv.TA, op. 4756, d. 12, l. 1-23).

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a) 9 TD, 20 TD, 18 TD, 25 MD, TD "SS" "Great Germany" with the task of holding the Orlovsky bridgehead at any cost.

6) The operational reserve of the enemy had: an accumulation of infantry of unknown number in the areas: Bulgakovskiy and Kuzminka. Accumulation of tanks of unknown number in the area of Dolbilovo, 25 tanks and 300 vehicles in the area of Strukovo, Orlovsky, 140 tanks, 210 vehicles with infantry in the area of Sukhochev, Borilovo, Grachevsky.

c) Using sharply rugged terrain and motorized mechanized troops, the enemy in front of the army front created a strong mobile anti-tank defense to a depth of 25 km, had three lines of defense: the Ors, Nugr, Tskan and Mokhovitsa rivers with the presence of resistance centers and strongholds between them using in a large number of mines and land mines "".

This document (hereinafter referred to as the "Lelyushenko Report"), which was intended to "analyze the offensive of the 4th TA troops in

Oryol operation", was signed by the Guards, Colonel-General D.D. Lelyushenko on March 22, 1946 and sent to the Directorate for the Use of War Experience of the General Staff of the Red Army.

By the time the "Lelyushenko Report" was compiled, Dmitry Danilovich held the post of commander of the armored and mechanized troops of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, the trophy documents of the opposite side had not yet been completely sorted out. The main documents of the archive of the Oryol group (9th and 2nd tank armies of the Wehrmacht) did not fall into the hands of our competent authorities at all and are now stored in the Federal Military Archive of Germany. I had the opportunity to familiarize myself with the most important ones, and to make photocopies of some.

When comparing the documents of the Soviet 4th Panzer Army and the 2nd Panzer Army of the Wehrmacht, the largest battle, Borilovskoye (26.07 - 04.08.1943), which was carried out as part of the Oryol offensive operation under the code name "Kutuzov" is restored in detail (12.07 - 18.08.1943).

TsAMORF, f. 4 tv. TA, op. 4756, d. 12, l.8.

2 On the document - the stamp of the Office with the incoming No. 0404 dated March 22, 1946.

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On the maps of the 4th Tank Army, as well as on the maps-schemes of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps, the 30th Ural Corps, the initial position of these formations is clearly visible, and combat actions are also traced (maps and maps-diagrams in documents 11- there are no shopping malls).

On the maps of the German XXIII army corps, the defense zone of its formations (the Schmal group and the Harpe group) is very accurately and clearly indicated, and one of the maps reflects the position of the formations of the groups for each day of hostilities.

The Lelyushenko Report contains significant inaccuracies and gross errors. In particular: "... in the offensive zone of 4 TA with a length of 17 km, the trotivnik group was as follows: a / 9 TD, 20 TD, 18 TD, 25 MD, TD "SS" "Great Germany" with the task: at any cost hold the Orlovsky bridgehead ... "

This fundamental document indicates the offensive zone of the 4th Panzer Army - 17 km. If we consider a section of the front of the German defense 17 km away, then in accordance with the maps of the XXIII corps, the following German formations were located on it: section Vetrova - Lunevo, 18th TD on the section Lunevo - Krivchee,

25th motorway on the section Krivchee - Gogolevo, the northern outskirts of Bolkhov!.

If we take the section of the German defense, which was occupied by the divisions listed in the Lelyushenko Report, then this section is more than three times longer in length - not 17 km, but 65 km - from the Odrino Karachevsky District to the city of Bolkhov (see . map No. 1 and 2 in the block of color maps and diagrams).

So, on the line from Odrino to Uzkoie, the following German formations defended themselves: MD "Grossdeutschland"? on the section Odrino - Izmorozn, 253rd frontier on the section Izmo

1 VA-MA VN24/23-135K.

2In the "Lelyushenko Report" - TD "SS" "Great Germany". Firstly, not tank, but motorized, although there were more tanks and self-propelled guns in this division than in any tank division of the Wehrmacht; secondly, the VG division has nothing to do with the SS formations. The largest unit of the Wehrmacht is 23,324 men (see VA-MA VN 10/209). Formed only from volunteers. patronized by Adolf Hitler himself.

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discord - Volobuyev, 9th TD on the section Volobuyev - Narrow!. Further, in the area from the Uzkoie settlement to Bolkhov, the divisions indicated above were on the defensive. Bolkhov himself at that time was defended by the 26th Infantry Division with reinforcements.

So, Colonel General D.D. Lelyushenko "pulled by the ears" to the 17-kilometer sector of the attack of the Badanov shock group the motorized division "Great Germany". The question is: why? Naturally, in order to give significance to the victory won during the Oryol operation, and in order to justify the huge losses that our tankers suffered during the breakthrough of the enemy's defenses. There was no "Greater Germany" at that time on this 17-kilometer section. It was located in the Odrino area, Iz Morozn, which is 10-15 km north of the railway station. d. Karachev - Hotynets, covering this important highway.

The "Report of Lelyushenko" also says: "By this time, by order of the commander of the Western Front, the 5th and 25th incomplete TCs entered the operational subordination of the army. 25 TK. 29.7 left operational subordination, and 5 TK was used in the second echelon of the army. And again inaccuracies.

According to the reporting documents of the tank brigades that were part of these corps, they, in their entirety (another matter - much less than the regular and initial strength) participated in the Battle of Borilov, and it was on this 17-kilometer breakthrough section. This is confirmed by written documents and maps kept in the German and Soviet military archives. Why was this phrase "incomplete" needed? I answer: in order to reduce the number

the laziness of the armored vehicles of the Badanov group. Before advancing, the 5th and 25th tank corps were replenished with personnel and armored vehicles. And even later, already during the battle, separate tank brigades of these two corps received reinforcements from the army reserve. Let me remind you that the entire Badanov group had 978 tanks and self-propelled guns before the battle, the non-German Harpe group had 384 tanks and self-propelled guns.

1 VA-MAVN 24/23 - 135k. 2

TsAMORF, f. 4th Guards TA, op. 4756, d. 12, l. 6.

155

According to the Lelyushenko Report, 712 tanks took part in the fighting on the 17-kilometer section from our side, about the same number - 700 steel vehicles from the German side (three tank divisions of 100 vehicles each - 300 units, in Great Germany "- over 250 tanks and self-propelled guns and another 165 tanks of unidentified ownership in the area of Dolbilovo and Strukovo).

According to the documents stored in the Podolsk archive, the 4th Panzer Army alone had 733 tanks and self-propelled guns before the start of the battle. In order not to be unfounded, I give data on the composition of the 4th tank army before the start of the battle

zheniya.

STRENGTH AND WEAPONS OF THE 4TH TANK ARMY ON JULY
25, 1943

—

wa |

PPSHuPVD

btv.mk | 15030 | 6643 | 5144 | 358 So [10158 |
4256 | 3559 | 194 30tk |10849| 5045 | 3410 |
210

135 | 202 | 104 | 16/122mm 67 | 148]
61 | 16/12mm 60 | 16122-mm |:

12/152 mm

|

12 8121 -|!-

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|
| Total |38581 16445 | 12773 | 798 271.8 g 61 62 | 212 553 | 119

b1yumcp | 1147 | 1147 | 393 6 [n 51 orbn | 108
| 108 | 16 te =

Note. The reporting document indicates that in the period from July 26 to July 30, 11 shopping malls received: T-34 - 15, MK-3 - 16 (CAMORF, Ff. 323, op. 4756, d.4, l. 76).

1 TsAMORF, f. 323, op. 4756, d.4, l. 76.

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As you can see, only 764 tanks and self-propelled guns took part in the 4th tank army in the battle of Borilovsky (1 - KV-1, 568 - T-34, 119 - T-70, 16 - MK-3; 48 - self-propelled guns 122 , 12 - SAU 152).

Thus, Lelyushenko was true to himself. He distorted historical facts, misleading not only the military, who are now studying and studying the tactics and strategy of using armored forces in the Great Patriotic War, but also historians who are familiarizing themselves with the documents of the war. In this case, he deliberately underestimated our forces and greatly increased the forces of the opposite side, practically equalizing them. For what? Naturally, to justify the big losses.

HOW IT WAS

The 4th Panzer Army, having entered the gap, which was provided by the troops of the 8th Rifle Corps of the 11th Guards Army of General Baghramyan on the front of Luchka - Shemyakino - Ivlevo (a section of the German defense 17 km away), was supposed to deliver a swift blow in a southerly direction , in order to cut the communications of the Oryol group of German troops - the railway and the highway in the Naryshkino - Shakhovo section, along the way completing the isolation of the German units holding the Bolkhovsky bridgehead.

Part of the forces of the 11th Guards Army, after breaking through the German defenses and bringing the 4th Panzer Army into the gap, were to turn east in the direction of Borilovo and, together with the troops of the 61st Army, encircle and destroy the enemy's Bolkhov grouping.

"July 25 to our command post," writes in his memoirs the commander of the 11th Guards Army, Lieutenant General

1 During the Oryol-Bryansk defensive operation in early October 1941, according to the memoirs of D.D. Lelyushenko, the troops of his 1st Guards Rifle Corps destroyed over 300 German tanks. According to the reports of the 4th Panzer Division of the enemy, only 59 tanks took part in the attack on Mtsensk. Thus, each German tank on the way from Orel to Mtsensk was destroyed 5 times.

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THEIR. Bagramyan, - the commander of the front, Colonel General V.D. Sokolovsky, commander of the 4th tank army, Lieutenant General V.M. Badanov and a member of the Military Council of this army, Major General V.G. Gulyaev. I knew Badanov since the autumn of 1942 in the South-Western direction. He was an experienced commander of large tank formations. The tank corps he commanded did an excellent job in the battle on the Volga. Now General Badanov was promoted: he was appointed commander of a tank army. He now had 500 powerful new vehicles that had just rolled off the production line, and also the 5th and 25th tank corps, handed over by us. It seemed to move this colossus - and it will sweep away everything in its path. We already had a lot of experience in chewing through strong, deep-echeloned defenses on sharply rough terrain, and I doubted the advisability of bringing such a mass of tanks into battle without proper preparation and ensuring a breakthrough. Tanks can, as they say, get bogged down in the enemy's defenses and suffer unjustified losses. Wouldn't it be better to deploy an army in the Khotynets direction: there are better conditions for tank operations, and this direction itself becomes decisive? But General V.D. Sokolovsky stood his ground: the tanks would go to Bolkhov. Then I asked to be given a few days to prepare for the entry of the tank army into the zone of operations of the 8th Guards Corps. V.M. Badanov began ardently arguing that the tank army itself would be able to break through the defenses and crush the enemy. Since his opinion corresponded to the plan of the front commander, it was decided to bring in a tank army in the Bolkhov direction on the move.

This is how Ivan Khristoforovich Bagramyan saw the important moment in the decision to bring in the strategic reserves of the Supreme High Command. I note that he remembered this many years after the war. Undoubtedly, these judgments of his are subjective. In addition, he put his thoughts on paper, already knowing the negative results of tank battles, especially in the first battles.

! Bagramyan I.Kh. My memories. - Yerevan: Hayastan, 1980. Pp. 531-532.

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However, at the very beginning of the Kutuzov operation, Bagramyan considered the Bolkhov direction to be the main one, and now suddenly another direction, the Khotynets direction, has become paramount for him.

There is no doubt that Badanov sent the army in the Bolkhov direction with the permission of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and Stalin, and this issue was agreed with Antonov, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who oversaw the Oryol operation in the absence of Vasilevsky, as well as with the commander of the Western Front Sokolovsky and a representative of the Stavka Zhukov in this direction. That is, Sokolovsky this time did not go on about Bagramyan. One gets the impression that Bagramyan during the operation "Kutuzov" all the time "pulled the blanket over himself." He has the best guard divisions, he has three tank corps, he has reinforcements in the form of marching cadet companies, and a cavalry corps... And now give Balanov's tank army as well. And the result, frankly, did not correspond to the strength and power of his army, the composition of which was larger than any front. The same General Belov, having a more modest 61st Army (8 rifle divisions, a tank corps, a tank brigade and a tank regiment), achieved much better results - Bolkhov took it.

By the way, the 4th Panzer Army was not sent to Bolkhov, but to the west of it and was introduced into the zone of action of Bagramyan's army, protecting its right flank from attacks from the liberated German divisions, which had previously been pinned down by battles at Bolkhov. The task of the 4th Panzer Army was to enter the gap (and as it turned out, in fact, it was necessary to break through the front, because parts of the 8th Rifle Corps could not do this), bypass Bolkhov from the west, block the Bolkhov retreat enemy groupings and a blow directed strictly to the south to cut off enemy communications (railway and highway) in the Shakhovo area.

No matter how late the decision was made to break through, the 4th Panzer Army arrived on the right flank of the Western Front at a critical moment, when the fighting here, including through the fault of Bagramyan, reached a dead end.

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By July 26, in front of the front of the Badanov strike group, the enemy defense "passed northeast of the outskirts of the city of Bolkhov, Zel. Luzhki, Malaya Chern, Lunevo, Prilepy, Rykovsky, Stolbchee, Korentyaeva and further to the southwest.

In order to have an accurate idea of the sector of the front that the German troops occupied, I quote in full a document found in the Federal Military Archive of Germany.

"Top Secret Command XX
T Army Corps

Operational department (1a). No. 2212/43
Command post 07/24/43

Regarding: the sphere of the borders of divisions on the defensive. (Map 1:50,000)

1. In accordance with the order of the command of the sphere of the border divisions on the defensive, the following:

a) 18 td - kSHAK:

Khotetovo (18) - Ors (LI) - Klyaginsky (NP) - One Shchekino (18) - Sukhochevo (GL) - Kolontaevo (APL) - Sko rodumka (APL) - Ozerki (18).

6) 18td - k20tdi20 td - KISHAK:

Linnet - Prilepy - Voinovo (20) - Voinovsky (18) - Shemyakino (20) - Kalininsky (18) - Selemenevo (18) - Rozhkovo (20) - Yuzhn. Skorodumka - Ozerki (20) - Vetlovka (EL) - Zlyn (MI) - Aleksandrovka district (PP) - Dolbilovo (IP) - r. Mokhovitsa.

c) 20 td - to 10 mdi 10 md - to PAK:

Red - Vetrovo - Rudnevo - Bol. Chern (all by 20 TD) - Malinovka (10) - Savinki - Pleasant - Martynovsky - Prilepy - Nikolsky district (all - by 10).

1 VA-MAVN 26-10/113.

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d) Yumd - kEtdi9td - kGSHAK:

Bulgakovo (10) - Karateevo (9) - Kuzminka (10) - Sharapovo (10) - Chernoye (10) - Lebedinsky (9) - Ivanovsky (10) - Nikolsky district (10) - Selikhovo (9).

e) 9td - k253 pd:

Volobeevo - Razbegaevka (253) - Zhidkoe (9) - Shakhovsky (253) - Chekhovsky (253) - the southern outskirts of Selikhovo.

f) 253 pd - kTUAK:

Stroevo (253) - Skvortsovsky (GU) - Krasnaya Bereza (253) - Alekseevka (253).

Spheres of defense boundaries for 253 frontiers are mandatory in accordance with

branching with an order.

2. The commanders of battle groups, in order to defend their sector of defense, to repel the offensive of enemy troops, may, by mutual agreement, involve units and subunits of other divisions. At the same time, each division is responsible for its own sector of defense and for all territorial needs (military commandant's office, civilian population, roads).

3. Foreign units located in the rear area, not belonging to the general command of the corps, must report themselves to the General Staff by 30.7.43 and indicate the combat units, forces and location.

Commander of the XXIII Army Corps, Chief of Staff of the Corps. Signatures.

OFFENSIVE

It follows from the documents that, according to the plan and order of the commander of the Western Front, the troops of the shock group of the 4th Panzer Army were tasked with entering the gap in the sector of the 8th Guards Rifle Corps and, developing an offensive behind enemy lines, by the end of the first day, cut enemy communications (railway and highway) in several places at once from Naryshkino to Khotynna.

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Given that almost adequate enemy forces had accumulated in the breakthrough area by this time, represented by three tank and two motorized Mi divisions, as well as separate self-propelled artillery divisions, we can say that it was unrealistic for our tankers to complete this task.

It must be said frankly, and this is confirmed by documents, including the materials of the "Report on the combat operations of troops 4 TAs 26.07. until 25.08.43" (hereinafter referred to as the "Report of the 4th TA"), the plan and tasks of the local operation of the troops of the Western Front but the breakthrough of the enemy defenses by the troops of the Badanov strike group were not fulfilled.

There was no breakthrough as such, the cutting off of the Bolkhov and Orlyuv groups and the encirclement of the enemy did not take place. And here, in the words of Rokossovsky, "the enemy was pushed out of the Oryol ledge, and not his defeat."

For the German command, the offensive of Badanov's tank group was not unexpected. All types of reconnaissance established when, where and with what forces the Soviet tankers would attack. Countermeasures were quickly taken. This is convincingly evidenced by the following archival documents.

"Secret
ORDER No. 5

ShNab XXSH of the army corps
Operational department (1a). No. 2206/43. 07/24/43. 13.00

Regarding: the 20th and 18th Panzer Divisions for
immediate transfer to all commanders of
formations and units.

I order:

1. The current front line of defense must be held without fail. Combat units should immediately dig in. I strictly forbid the unauthorized withdrawal of troops from the line of defense or the reduction of the front line.

1 TsAMORF, f. 323, op. 4756, d.4, l. 74.

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2. Behind each battalion it is necessary to keep a reserve, ready to engage in battle, go on the counterattack and strike back.

3. For divisions to temporarily withdraw units from the front in order to form rapid response units from them. They must be kept directly behind the dangerous area in full combat readiness.

4. By any means, clear the firing sector in front of the front line of defense and in front of all battalion strongholds.

5. Due to the tense situation with ammunition, they must be used very thoughtfully, so that in the event of an enemy attack, they can protect themselves with the help of barrage and concentrated fire. The 112th Artillery Directorate is authorized by me to supervise the execution of this order.

6. By all means, it is necessary to re-build and prepare anti-tank positions in the rear. To involve the civilian population in the work. Convert the occupied positions and bivouacs into strongholds. It should be taken into account that divisional commanders have engineer sapper battalions at their disposal, which should also be involved in this work.

Commander of the XX-Sarmey Corps, General
I. Frissier!.

"Top Secret Supplement to
Order No. 5

20th Panzer Division

Operational department (1a). No. 801/43. 07/24/43 Regarding
parts of the division

KNI division - Skorodumka

I order:

Urgently form parts of the rapid response. Before the evening of July 25,
report to the division about their organization, equipment and placements.

1 VA-MAEVN 24-23/126.

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All non-commissioned officers and privates seconded from field battalions
to regulate movement and protect prisoners are recalled back and by the
evening of 25.07 must appear in the division and report to the titab of the rear
department (2a).

Distributor: 1st
quartermaster officer of the 101st motorized regiment (18th TD)

Signature".

Of no small importance were the weather conditions, which made the
offensive operations of the group's tank formations as difficult as possible.

METEOROLOGICAL SITUATION IN THE AREA
OF BATTLE ACTIONS OF THE 11TH GUARDS, 4TH TANK
AND 61st ARMIES IN THE PERIOD FROM 25 TO 31.07.1943 G2.

General characteristics
25-30.7.43

The weather is mostly cloudy. Worse weather: Light rain to
thunderstorms.

Air temperature at night - 12-15, in the daytime - 25-27 degrees.

Conditions for combat activities of troops:

Low cloud cover and rains hindered air operations; the use of aviation at night is limited. On the ground visibility is unsatisfactory. Torrential and continuous rains sharply worsened the passability of the soil and dirt roads. Dirt roads are impassable for vehicles, in some places they are completely impassable. On the rivers, the rise in water level: on the river. Vytebet, Vyrka, Ors, Nugr, Tskan, Mashok, Berezuyka up to 40-50 cm, on the river. Oka, Zusha up to 30 cm. On small rivers, the rise of water lasted for several hours.

1 VA-MA VN 24-35/109.

2 TsAMO RF, Ff. 338, op. 5920, d. 9, l. 73; f. 418, op. 10695, d. 117, l. 91. Archive of the weather station in Livny, Oryol region (weather report for July 1943).

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31.7.43 Improvement of the weather: reduction of cloudiness to a small one. Cessation of rain. Visibility improved to 10 km. Winds north, weak. Improving the passability of dirt roads. Lowering of the water level in the rivers.

DAILY WEATHER CONDITIONS

Time

Phenomena

25—31.07 AZ | Mostly cloudy

| But. Rain. Visibility 4-8' km. When the phenomena of rain, tu- |

| on and haze - 0.5-2 km. | The predominance of winds north- | noah and northeastern quarter-

[ra within 15-18, at night

| 20—27 tr.

| verti 1—5 m/sec. Temperature - 6 |

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Average

Precipitation

temperature |

25.07 18.3 | Rain - 26.07 | 192

| Lie 4 { groa | 27.07 190 |

Rain, → rose

8. _ 19.3 Rain _ | | Dojl, |

29.07

19.3 De storm 30.07 |

193 | Man, o

m DOJLL

31.07 184 |

Rain, Mr. Thunderstorm

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FIGHTING: DAY BACK

The operation to break through the German defense sector west of Bolkhov took place in two stages, and they constitute the essence of the Borilovsky armored battle.

FIRST STAGE OF THE BATTLE

Combat operations of troops to break through the first line of defense of the enemy in the Luchki-Shemyakino-Ivlevo sector from July 26 to 28, 1943.

Shlurm of the enemy's first line of defense on the Ors River

The first day

July 26, Monday. Weather: at night and in the morning mostly rain, overcast, cloudy, cool.

In this section, 25-30 kilometers deep, the enemy in front of the front of Badanov's combined tank group had three lines of defense with centers of resistance and strong points between them.

In the "Report of the 4th TA" the first day of the offensive is presented as follows: "Having completed the concentration by 11.00 on 26.7.43, the troops of the 4th TA, by order of the front, went on the offensive in the general direction: Svistovo, Znamenskoye, Samoryadovo, having the main grouping of troops on its left flank. One half day was given to prepare the operation and organize the interaction of the army, and in fact the army entered the battle on the move. At the request I command

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of the general Western Front to postpone the start of the operation for at least one day - a refusal was received.

At the turn of Prilepa, Lunevo, Mal. Chern, Dmitrov (Dmitrovskoye. - E. Shch.), the army met a highly developed anti-tank defense with anti-tank artillery, minefields covered by self-propelled guns and groups of 15-20 tanks. Overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy, breaking into his defenses during 26.7.43, the army had an insignificant success!

About this moment, the "Report of Lelyushenko" says: "The troops of 4 TA, following the order of the Military Council of the Western Front at 12.00.26.7, went on the offensive in the general direction: Svistov, Znamenskoye, Samoryadov. At the turn: Bulgakovo Prilepy, Lunevo, Mal. Chern, Dmitrov formations and units of the army met a highly developed enemy defense. In the districts: Dolbilovo, Suryanino, Rudnevo, up to 25-30 tanks were found in each.

Overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy, by the end of the day on July 26, the troops of the army advanced 2-4 km.

So, we are seeing a difference in the Reports of the same actions. Firstly, Lelyushenko doubled the groups of German tanks, and secondly, near Lelyushenko, "the troops advanced 2-4 km on the first day of the offensive." Compare it with the original document. The "Report of the 4th TA" recorded: "the army had little success."

But in this and another case, the tankers of the Badanov group had little success that day, more precisely, they had no success, given the ultimate goal of the first day of the offensive: access to the Naryshkino, Bunino, Khotynets area - and this is 50 km from the first line enemy defense. But the most important thing is that the breakthrough of the enemy's defense did not take place. The fighting on the banks of the Ors and Nugr rivers took on a protracted character. Now, according to the documents of the formations that are part of the 6th Guards Mechanized, 11th Tank and 30th Ural Tank Corps, according to the memoirs

¹ TsAMORF, f. 323, op. 4756, d.4, l.7. 2 Ibid., f.4 guards. TA, op. 4756, d. 12, l.8.

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participants in the battles, we will follow how the enemy's defense broke through, or rather, "gnawed through", and what did it cost the naked troops? What kind of porridge was brewed that day in the boiling cauldron of battle? Bitter and salty, mixed with sweat, blood and tears shed over the loss of comrades in arms.

1st Panzer Corps

On July 25, the commander of the 4th Tank Army, General Badanov, gave Major General N.N. An oral order to Radkevich: on the morning of July 26, the corps, together with units and formations of the 8th Rifle Corps, to break through the enemy defenses in the Korentyaev-Vetrov sector and go on the offensive in the general direction: Gorki, Dolbilovo, Kuzminka, Znamenskoye, Khotynen. In the future, acting behind enemy lines, defeat his tank grouping and reach the area of the settlement of Konevka, Mayaki, Chelishchevo, Krasnaya Nov.

On the right, in the direction of Shemyakino, Kuzminka, Znamenskoye, the 26th Guards Rifle Division advances.

On the left, in the direction of Shemyakino, Selikhovo, Shakhovo, the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps is advancing.

"Fulfilling the order of the commander of 4 TA at 10.00 on 07/26/1943, the corps went on the offensive in two echelons in two directions.

Right direction: Lesnik, elev. 208.3, bypassing Gorka from the west, Serpilovo, Kuzminka, Proletarsky, the western outskirts of Znamenskoye and further along the highway to Khotynets.

Left direction: Yachnoe, sowing. outskirts of Stolbchee, vys. 221.2, app. outskirts of Rudnevo, elev. 206.3, Tsymbulovo, Tskan, sowing. outskirts of Lokna, Sharapovo, east. outskirts of Znamenskoye, Kitaevo, Moschennaya.

In the first echelon, 65 and 20 brigade with 1493 SAPs, in the second - 36 brigade and 12 msbr.

15-minute artillery preparation along the front line of the enemy, in the future, artillery worked on requests.

10 minutes before the start of the offensive, a command arrived on the NP

1 TsAMO RF, f. 3412, op. 1, d.66, l.4-5.

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Deer of the 8th Rifle Corps, Major General P.F. Malyshev, who said that at 10 am he would not launch an offensive

maybe, although by this time the signal had already been given to two brigades of the 11th Panzer Corps - to attack the front line of the enemy defenses.

General Bagramyan, the commander of the 11th Guards Army, confirmed the statement of General Malyshev and asked to return the tanks to their original position, but this could not be done, and the tanks had already entered the battle.

The tankers and motorized riflemen of General Radkevich's corps met with a well-organized anti-tank defense of the enemy, which was combined with the actions of machine gunners located outside the settlements - in rye and other shelters. Anti-tank defense centers were in the areas: Shemyakino, Gorki, Vetrov, Rudnevo.

During the day, parts of the corps, without the support of the infantry of the 26th and 83rd Guards rifle divisions, fought fierce battles at the turn: Shemyakino - Gorki - Vetrova, (claim.) Vetrovsky, inflicting the main blow in the Shemyakino, Gorki area.

On this day, part of our aircraft, having lost their orientation, bombed and fired at the battle formations of the corps.

The artillery of the 26th and 83rd Guards Rifle Divisions provided good support, but did not suppress the firing points (fired at squares).

At noon, the enemy from the direction of Shemyakino with forces up to an infantry battalion, supported by 10 tanks and up to 5 self-propelled guns, counterattacked the battle formations of the corps. The counterattack was repulsed, the enemy retreated to his original position.

The corps, having suffered heavy losses, by the end of the day entrenched itself at the turn: high. 208.3 - Red. During the night, the units regrouped their forces and put themselves in order.

zhzhzh

It is known that the tank corps of the 1943 model included three tank, one motorized rifle brigades and auxiliary units (reinforcement units): artillery, anti-tank and mortar regiments.

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Let us consider how separate parts of tank corps acted on the first day of the Borilovsky armored battle, the documents of which are most fully presented in the military archive of the city of Podolsk.

Let us dwell on the example of the fighting of the 12th Motorized Rifle Brigade (hereinafter referred to as the 12th Motorized Rifle Brigade) of the 11th Tank Corps.

By the time they entered the battle, the recruitment of the 12th mebr was completely completed.

On July 24, the brigade received a combat order from the commander of the 11th tank corps to advance in the direction of 1 km north. Gorodok, then continued the march to the area of the settlement of Krutitsa and already on the night of July 25 sent reconnaissance in the direction of Vetrov.

July 26, at 2.00, the brigade received a combat order to attack
captivity.

"The task of the brigade is to advance beyond 20 brigade in the direction of Yachnoye, sowing. env. Columnar, high 221.2, app. env. Rudnevo, elev. 206.3, Tsymbulovo, Tskan, sowing. env. Lokn, Sharapovo, east. env. Znamenskoye, Beldino, Kitaevo, Moschenoe and, having mastered the railway station. irts Khotynets, exit vr-n south-west. env. Melovos'.

The brigade, consisting of 3032 people, was armed with: light machine guns - 111, heavy machine guns - 45, anti-aircraft guns - 9, anti-aircraft guns - 81, 76-mm guns - 12, 45-mm - 12, 120-mm mortars - 6, 82-mm - thirty; more than half of the brigade was armed with machine guns (1552 units of PSH or PPD). In addition, the brigade had 7 armored vehicles with machine guns, 10 armored transporters, 15 motorcycles and 254 trucks.

Was the brigade fully provided with ammunition, fuel and lubricants and food, and during the fighting had no interruptions in supply?

At 5:00 a.m., the brigade took up its original position. The offensive front was approximately 2.5-3 km.

The enemy (59th infantry regiment of the 20th TD) took up defensive positions at the line of Shemyakino - Vetrovo - Voinovo, blocking the breakthrough on their own

1 TsAMORF, f. 3371, op. 1, d. 12, l. 20-21. ? There, f. 3412, op. 1, d. 80, l.2.; f. 3371, op. 1, d.25, l. 350.

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we eat the left flank and the exit of our units on communications: railway. Orel - Bryansk, Orel - Karachev highway, Bolkhov - Karachev highway.

Before the offensive at 0945, a 30-minute air strike was launched against the enemy, but first, due to poor visibility, the attack aircraft "processed" the orders of their brigade, then, realizing their mistake, they tried to correct it. At the same time, a 15-minute artillery preparation began.

At 10 o'clock the infantry and tanks attacked. An hour later, having shot down a reinforced outpost, they approached 400-500 m directly to the front line of the enemy's defense, but, pressed by powerful artillery and machine-gun fire,

the infantry lay down.

Using the time of the fire raids of our artillery, by 1300 the battalions moved forward another 100-200 meters and, having suffered heavy losses in killed and wounded, again lay down at the turn of the road from the center of Stolbchee to the Krasny settlement.

At 15.30 enemy tanks began to move from the southern outskirts of Vetrovo. The battalions of the 12th Mebr took precautionary measures, pushing anti-tank and anti-tank missiles forward. At 16.00, the right flank of the brigade counterattacked with up to a company of motorized infantry and 7 tanks. The counterattack was repulsed, the enemy lost 2 tanks and at least a platoon of officers and soldiers. When repulsing the counterattack, the calculation of the anti-tank rifle distinguished itself - sergeants Tarasov and Kulikov. With their well-aimed shots, at the very beginning of the counterattack, brave armor-piercers knocked out 2 enemy tanks one after another, and the rest turned back. The infantry also withdrew.

"As a result of the first day of fighting, 3 MSB-n was occupied by Krasny and went to 300 m north-west. it, and 1 mebr-n went to the line of 1.2 km north. Columnar "I.

Having lost 295 people killed and wounded during the first day of fighting, the 12th motorized rifle brigade, in order to regroup its forces and put the divisions participating in the battle in order, took up defense at the achieved lines for the night².

1 TsAMO RF, f.3412, op. 1, d. 80, l. 2. ? There, f. 3371, op. 1, d. 15, l. 140.

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6th Guards Mechanized Corps

On July 25 at 17.30 the commander of the 4th Tank Army verbally assigned the commander of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps the following task: "6th Guards. MK, acting on the left flank of the Army, part of the forces, together with 8 SKS on the morning of 07/26/43, to break through the enemy defenses at the line of Konoplyanka - Lunevo - Mal. Black. With a breakthrough in the defense, bring in the main forces and by the end of the day reach the Shakhovo, Gorki, Lunino region, cutting the Bryansk-Orel railway in the Shakhovo region.

Corps commander Lieutenant General A.I. Akimov decided: "To break through the defense with the forces of the 49th Motorized Rifle Brigade, reinforced by two batteries of the 1st Guards. SAP and 56 TP with the support of 51 Guards. paws and 240 mini, with the subsequent introduction of 16 and 17 mbr into the breakthrough, having in reserve 3 msb 17 mbr, one battery of 1 guards. sap and 29 tp.

49 m6r received the task, advancing from the line of Egino, high. 211.6, break through the front and further advance in the direction of Rudnevo, Rozhkov.

1Bi 17 MBR concentrated in the Ivanovsky, Kudinovsky, Verkh. Radomka, Plaschanskoye with a task - from the exit

house 49 mbr at the turn of the river. Ors enter the gap and, in fire interaction with the 11th shopping mall, advance in the direction of Suryanino, Gradunovka, Martynovsky, Muratovo and by the end of the day reach the Shakhovo, Bunino, Bednota, Salkovo, Gorodishche squares "2.

The corps commander's observation post (jointly with the commander of the 5th Guards Rifle Division) was located on the edge of a grove 1 km south of the Turya settlement. There was a direct telephone connection with the commander of the 8th Rifle Corps, whose CL was equipped on the eastern edge of the grove, 1.5 km west of Ivanovsky.

The commander of the corps with the NP could contact the headquarters, parts of the corps, including artillery, by telephone, radio, and through communications officers.

By the beginning of hostilities, parts of the corps participating in the breakthrough began to deploy from the move at the turn of Egino - high. 211.6, having 3-4 hours to organize interaction.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3434, op. 1, d.2, l. 5. 2 Ibid., op. 1, d.2, l. 5-6.

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Despite the tight deadlines for preparing the offensive, the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps launched an attack at 11.45. By the end of the day, parts of the corps advanced to a depth of 3-4 km, reaching the line of the river with advanced units. Ors in the Voinovsky area.

During the day, the enemy, maneuvering reserves, counterattacked parts of the corps six times with a strength of up to an infantry battalion, supported by up to 20 medium tanks. By the end of the day, it became clear that units of the 18th and 20th Panzer Divisions were defending in the corps' offensive zone, and that on this line the enemy had created a strong anti-tank defense, which it was not possible to overcome on the move.

From the memoirs of a participant in the battles of the German Hinz Rolf:

"eleven. The new direction of the Soviet offensive.

Along with the direction to the east of Orel, a new direction was developed - to the left of the 20th Panzer Division, thus, the situation on this sector of the front became more complicated. A distraction attack was required in a distraction attack. The 18th Panzer Division came to the right to help the 20th Panzer Division.

On July 26, a message was received: 50 enemy tanks were approaching, the expected direction of attack was the right sector of the neighboring division. The command officer of the 21st Tank Regiment, who was heading to the command post to report on the situation to Colonel Weber, saw T-34s breaking through at a distance of 100 meters. Fortunately, he managed to spa-

stay, and he informed the regiment commander about the enemy tanks. At this time, several more tanks entered from the rear. Our tanks immediately entered the battle, and the situation was stabilized. There were enemy tanks all around. At that moment the German tanks opened fire. Soon there were several destroyed Soviet tanks on the battlefield. Of the 50 vehicles, 32 were damaged, mostly by tankers of the 4th company. The infantry advancing with tanks was dispersed or retreated. The enemy tank offensive failed.

Only near Shemyakinou of the 109th Motorized Regiment the situation remained tense. Therefore, the T-TU and T-Sh tanks were urgently sent there. A T-34 tank that broke through unexpectedly appeared in Suryanino, however

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he soon got stuck in a swampy area. Our tankers pulled out the tank, drew a cross on it and brought it into battle against their own troops. Tankers noted the excellent driving performance of the T-34, but the aiming device and the internal equipment of the tank ... left much to be desired.

The next day, our tanks were in ambush around Vetrovo: the 4th tank company was to the west, and other units were to the east of Vetrovo. At 11.15 heavy shelling began with the participation of rocket launchers. After 15 minutes, Russian tanks with infantry launched an offensive from both sides of the Krasny-Vetrovo road. The tankers let the enemy tanks in at a distance of several hundred meters and opened heavy fire on them. Four T-34 tanks caught fire at once, the fifth, engulfed in fire, rushed at full speed to the tank of our commander to ram it. The ram failed, a Soviet tank exploded a few meters from the target. The 4th tank company then turned to the right and fired on the advancing infantry, which retreated to their previous positions. Thus, the attack was repulsed.

During these battles, our motorized infantry was in a difficult position. German tanks had to fight with numerous enemy tanks. Artillery bombardment gave way to tank battles. At this time, the motorized infantry, who were in the very epicenter of the battle, were forced to lie down and were subjected to the most severe fire from artillery, tanks and rocket launchers, in addition, they were fired upon from the air. At the same time, the infantry, in spite of everything, had to stop the advance of the Russian motorized riflemen following the tanks. This turned out to be doubly dangerous. After successfully repulsing the enemy attack, the commander of the enemy tank unit took countermeasures: direct shelling of the infantry followed. The infantry was exposed to even greater danger at the moment when it had to repulse a particularly powerful blow from the enemy without the support of its own tanks. Gradually, the main burden of fighting was transferred to mobile fortresses, i.e. tanks.

After the fighting near Vetrovo, a breakthrough was reported

significant forces of Russian infantry south of Voinovo. Before

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the location of the 3rd tank company, several tanks appeared, two of which were immediately knocked out. At 14.45 one of the enemy tanks, obviously a reconnaissance one, with enviable composure rose to a height located in front of our unit. As soon as he rose to a height, he was hit by a direct hit from a shell and caught fire.

In the afternoon, the 4th tank company launched a counteroffensive from the southern part of Vetrovo against the enemy infantry. After this battle, an order was received to provide support to Voinovo. It was not possible to come to the rescue, since the tanks located in the Krasny VNP launched a new offensive in the south-western direction - towards Shemyakino. Here the defense was held by the 3rd tank company, which knocked out several tanks from a short distance.

With the onset of darkness, the Soviet troops again launched an offensive with 50 tanks along the entire front in a southeasterly direction through height 233.0. Despite our measures, we managed to knock out 12 tanks. However, one German tank was also hit, which, despite the damage, remained on the move.

Our tanks were getting smaller, reinforcements were needed. To do this, the tank division allocated a group of tanks from the 21st tank regiment under the command of Bauer. She took up positions southeast of Vetrovo, the left flank of the unit adjoined the settlement.

At dawn, at an altitude of 233.0, 45 enemy tanks appeared. Both sides waited at first. After the losses suffered the day before, the Russians became more cautious. As the Soviet tanks approached, both of our tank groups opened heavy fire. One of the battalions of the 21st Tank Regiment knocked out 9 tanks, 4 of which were of the American General Sherman type. Then at 12.00 a new Russian offensive began on a height of 233.0. The infantry followed the tanks. A small battle ensued with enemy tanks located northeast of Vetrovo.

Amazing stories were told about the Sherman tank. His cannon was said to provide the utmost accuracy.

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hits, and T-GU tanks cannot penetrate armor. However, after the battle, it turned out that these vehicles are just as easily hit as the T-34 tanks. Moreover, the T-34, with a good crew, is superior in quality to the Sherman tanks.

In Vetrovo there were several more destroyed enemy tanks, which, after our withdrawal, should not have fallen into the hands of the enemy. A special team completely disabled these tanks.

In Sgolbcheya, Soviet troops were preparing for a new offensive. Our bombers and attack aircraft attacked them to cover our withdrawal to the new front line. The Russians, guessing about our maneuver, attacked our retreating units from Stolbchee with 60 tanks and mobile artillery. Before the 4th Panzer Company left its positions, its tanks opened fire and stopped the offensive against Nick. 20 enemy tanks remained on the battlefield, the losses of the non-German side are insignificant.

During the retreat, the troops noted with satisfaction that there were no traffic jams on the roads. This is the merit of General Model, who always attached great importance to discipline on marches. Such traffic jams always meant a loss of time and, moreover, loss of life and material damage, since these accumulations were an excellent target for artillery and bombers.

Later, when our tankers and motorized riflemen nevertheless overcame this powerful first line of defense, it turned out that the system in depth consisted of support units, which, as a rule, were located at command heights. Their garrisons had a battalion of machine gunners with artillery and mortar reinforcements. Each node had 4-6 guns of caliber 105, 150 mm, at least three to four 37-mm guns, performing special tasks of anti-aircraft and anti-tank defense. Batteries of self-propelled guns and tanks were located in the tank-hazardous directions. In addition, the area in front of the forward edge and in between was shelled from the depths by artillery

1 Rolf H. The historical path of the 20th Panzer Division (VA-MA KN-OPa 20a).

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and mortar fire, all the power of which was directed to the destruction of manpower.

Directly behind the second echelons of defense were reserves up to a battalion and more, supported by groups of tanks from 16 to 50 vehicles. These reserves were used for counterattacks, directed, as a rule, at the flank of our attacking infantry. The defense centers did not have special engineering structures, with the exception of small minefields. One of the strengths of the enemy's defense was that the Nazis were able to locate and well camouflage fire weapons (mainly anti-tank guns and anti-personnel automatic weapons) in rye fields. This gave the enemy the opportunity to let the attacking infantry in and shoot it point-blank. Tanks were also shot at point-blank range with covered fire.

the one in the rye artillery.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF BATTLE
ACTIONS OF THE 10th MOTORIZED DIVISION OF THE ENEMY

"Secret
Monday 07/26/43

Purpose: defense of the
command post of the division - Bolshaya Chern

Morning report to the XXIII Army Corps.

The night passed without much incident.

Insignificant enemy artillery fire on the division's sector.

08.00. A busy movement of motorized columns and tanks was observed from the Stolbchee area northwest of Bulgakovo and Krasny.

09.00. 40 tanks are moving in marching order from Stolbchee to Bulgakovo.

09.10. Ta (operations department. - E. Shch.) offers the corps the supply of an anti-tank unit of the 20th motorized regiment to the southeast of Vetrovo.

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09.20. Task Ta. Move 10th East Company! and a combat unit from the rear service to the ulokna bridge.

09.35. After a strong artillery preparation, the enemy goes on the offensive on a broad front between Vetrovo and Bulgakovo.

In all likelihood, the enemy will take tough measures. After artillery preparation at 09.35 on the front line of the division's defense, he went on the offensive. The main blow was directed at the right flank of the division and at the left flank of the 20th Panzer Division.

09.50. [and informs the commander at the headquarters of the corps about the situation.

The division commander agreed to the supply of armored combat units (Zimmermann group), consisting of one tank unit.

The enemy attempted an offensive, inflicting the main blow on the right flank of the division, using tanks and infantry to break through the front line of defense. Before

At 10.30 this attack was successfully repelled. Separate battle tanks were destroyed in front of the defense front.

11.10. The 20th motorized regiment reports the discovery of a powerful group of machine guns and infantry south of Stolbchee.

11.15. 2nd battalion of the 20th motorized regiment
wife attack.

13.00. Separate wrecked enemy combat vehicles were destroyed at the front line of defense; the total number of Russian losses at the time of writing the report is about 30 tanks. Now the enemy is again taking up his original positions in front of the left flank of the division.

There is a shortage of artillery shells, especially if one considers that one has to count on the delivery of ammunition only in the evening.

14.20. Another message was received about the accumulation of tanks in the northern part of Stolbchee.

14.30. The head of the operations department (JTa) is sent to the XXIII army corps to receive instructions on the pre-planned transfer of the front line of defense to the south.

1 As part of many German divisions located along the perimeter of the Oryol Bulge, there was a unit (company or battalion) from among volunteers - Soviet citizens.

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It is important for a division to know how to coordinate it from the waters with neighboring subunits, and also in what sector the division should take up defense.

After clarification, the forward edge of the new defense sector runs approximately along the line Rudnevo - Sokolniki - a height north of Shemyakino - Bulgakovo (south).

18.30. Daily report to the XXIII Army Corps:

26.07. the enemy, with fresh, powerful tank forces and motorized infantry (the main forces of the XI tank corps), at 09.30, after powerful artillery preparation and with the support of assault aviation, advances along the entire front of the division.

The main blow is directed to the right flank of the division. All attacks were repulsed with heavy losses for the enemy. Separate wrecked tanks were destroyed at the front line of defense. According to the latest reports, the number of destroyed Russian tanks in the division's sector is 61 vehicles, of which 3 were from anti-aircraft guns.

In the afternoon, the enemy again with the forces of the infantry battalion

You, with the support of tanks, continued the offensive in several places, especially in the defense zone of two battalions of the 41st and 20th Infantry Regiments. These attacks choked under the aimed fire of all guns when the tanks did not reach 100 m from the forward edge.

The line of defense remained unchanged throughout the day everywhere, no reserve was required.

Own losses, given the brutal nature of the fighting, are within the acceptable norm.

The documents of the 49th mechanized brigade and the 29th separate tank regiment, kept in the military archive of the city of Podolsk, reflect in detail the events of the first day of the offensive.

49th mechanized brigade

By the beginning of hostilities, the 49th MBR, Lieutenant Colonel V.V. Jabot had 3,364 armed men: light machine guns - 114, heavy machine guns - 45, large-caliber DShK - 9; PTR - 97; mortars 120 mm - 6,

1 VA-MAVN 26-23/124.

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82 mm - 30; guns 76 mm - 12, 45 mm - 12; tanks T-34 - 32, T-70 - 7; BTRi BM - 17; 203 units trucks'.

On July 25, the commander gave the order to the soldiers of the Jabot brigade to make a breakthrough together with units of the 8th rifle corps in the area of the Lunevo settlement.

At 10 o'clock on July 26, 6 Il-2 planes bombed the enemy's close defenses in the Dolbilovo-Prilepy sector. At 11.00 artillery and mortars made a 15-minute raid on the front line of the enemy defenses.

FROM THE DOCUMENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE
DEPARTMENT (GS) OF THE ENEMY 18 TANK DIVISION:

"To the activity report Appendix
No. 477 dated July 27, 1943, the command
post of the division - Dulebino

Interrogation Report No. 31

On the afternoon of 26.07 south of Lunevo were taken
captured:

1. Alexey Chernov, born in 1909, private, Russian, peasant

nin from the Krasnodar region;

2. Baev Timofei, born in 1906, ordinary, Russian, peasant from the Tambov region;

3. Abdurakhmanov Mukhtar, born in 1915, private, Avar, peasant from Makhachkala (Caucasus);

4. Zinov Ivan, born in 1924, sergeant, peasant from the Mordovian Republic (Saransk region);

5. Tintibaev Cairo, born in 1921, private, Kazakh, railway worker from the Novosibirsk region.

They gave the following testimony:

They serve in the 1st and 2nd platoons of the 4th motorized rifle battalion of the 49th mechanized brigade.

The structure of the brigade: a tank regiment, 6 motorized rifle battalions (each with three companies), in addition - a reconnaissance company, a company of auto matches and an anti-tank battery (gun caliber 4.5 cm).

Number of rifle company: 120 enlisted men; most men are over the age of 35, many of them political criminals.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3346, op. 1, d. 3, l. 5.

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The motorized rifle battalion, which is part of the 49th mechanized brigade, as well as the tank regiment, was formed this spring in Zagorsk near Moscow, namely: instead of the previously existing rifle brigade, which was almost completely destroyed in another sector of the front. The newly formed brigade was named the 49th Guards Mechanized Brigade in memory of the heroic struggle of its predecessor.

Most of the rank and file of the rifle battalion was recruited from the reservists of the Far East, namely: from the 820th reserve brigade (Ryazanovka). The last batch arrived in Zagorsk at the end of June. The second battalion also arrived in June from the training sniper rifle regiment (Sand camps, Yaroslavl region). The last reserve regiment takes its name from one of its companies, where only snipers are trained; in other companies they train ordinary shooters.

Part of the rifle battalion arrived from Zagorsk on trucks, and part - to Belev in freight wagons of the train, and then - on trucks. The second battalion went to the front on foot. All units of the brigade arrived directly to the front line on the evening of 25.07, and by noon on 26.07 they were put into action during the attack on Lunevo. At the same time, most of the rank and file for the first time participated in hostilities.

The task of the brigade: an attack on Lunevo, the destruction of the enemy and the capture of this settlement. The arrows were not informed about further targets.

Only one prisoner could give exact information about the losses: 6 soldiers were killed in his squad. All those interrogated stated that the losses in killed and wounded were much higher.

Not a single prisoner gave evidence about the neighboring units, about the attitude towards subordinates, as well as information about the names of the high command.

Field mail address of the 2nd company of the 1st rifle battalion: 35725 Yu.

Field mail address of the 2nd company of the 2nd rifle battalion: 43036 (letter unknown).

The interpreter interrogated Ober-Lieutenant
Signed.

1 VA-MAVN 24-35/69.

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Mikhail Radugin, a fighter of the 16th Guards Mech Brigade, recalls:
"Fascist German troops took up defense along the southern banks of the Ors, Nugr and Mokhovitsa rivers. The depth of all three defensive lines reached 25-30 kilometers. Every natural fold in the terrain was used by the enemy for strong points, centers of resistance, and ambushes, in which the most diverse means of destroying manpower and equipment were hidden: anti-tank guns, tanks buried in the ground, machine guns, mortars, and so on. On each kilometer, the enemy concentrated up to two infantry battalions, 10 tanks each, 4 large-caliber guns, 11 anti-tank guns, 10 mortars, 12 heavy machine guns and 76 light machine guns. From the air, the positions were covered by large aviation forces.

On the way to Voskresensky brigade commander - Colonel V.M. Artemenko gathered the commanders of battalions and companies. To the right and to the left, rye and wheat fields turned yellow, ahead of them was a height, in front of which a large ravine yawned like a dark grin. Shooting rang out from the swaths made in the grain fields. Several high-explosive shells exploded. To avoid losses, the battalion dispersed into the line of company columns and accelerated the movement. The ravine helped to hide from enemy fire.

When the officers returned from Colonel Artemenko, Major Semenov immediately set the task for the platoon: to covertly approach the Ors River and, in the area of the settlement of Dule Bino, reconnoiter a ford to cross the battalion to the opposite bank.

The scouts walked for more than an hour - along ravines and gullies. Shots were heard from the river. The platoon dispersed, dug in and began to observe.

In front of the ravine stretched a narrow valley, along which the dark blue thread of the Orsa wound. Dulebino was clearly visible through binoculars on the southern coast. In front of him was a yellow rye field, on which swaths had been made all the way to the river. In the depths of the swath there are sheaves folded sideways. Therefore, mowed polos are also used here.

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sy for firing from behind cover. To the left of the village is the highway to Bolkhov.

Scout Prytkov noticed that the entire valley in front of the ravines of the raga was stained with explosions of shells and mines. This means that the area has been shot, because it is here on the map that the crossing is indicated.

Everything noticed was reported to the commander of the battalion of the guard, Major Semenov, who set the task of reconnaissance in force.

Semyonov immediately ordered the company commander:

- The company quickly go to the ford, covertly cross to the right bank of the Ors, dig in and be ready to support the exit of the tanks. Remember, go first, and the first is always difficult.

Here, three kilometers from the front line of the enemy, the soldiers dispersed along the slopes of the ravine, tanks were preparing for battle, the crews of which were waiting for the order to force the river.

As soon as Zhilin's company rose for a swift throw across the Ors, the Nazis opened such a dense, concentrated fire from the opposite bank that they had to lie down immediately. The senior lieutenant did not wait long and tried again, but immediately fell, knocked down by an enemy bullet. It can be seen that each has its own fiery arc. For Yefim Petrovich, she appeared in all her cruelty right here, on the bank of a nondescript rivulet, opposite the settlement of Dulebino.

The enemy must have noticed the accumulation of motorized infantry and tanks, because he increased the artillery and mortar fire, and then launched the aircraft. There were no anti-aircraft weapons in the battalion; they covered the concentration of the main forces of the brigade 5-6 kilometers behind the battalions. There, the air vultures circled high, fearing being shot down, and flew very low over the infantry, firing from heavy machine guns and dropping fragmentation bombs.

A telephone connection was brought to the NP, and the battalion commander

Guard Major Semenov, having contacted the brigade commander, reported the situation and received approval to prepare for a night battle. Conducting reconnaissance with the commanders of their companies and

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given funds, the battalion commander pointed to the area where it was necessary to place firing points, mortars, guns.

<...> Motorized riflemen were personally convinced of the true skill of the commander of the crew, Lieutenant Barabanov. In a third of an hour, he destroyed two enemy tanks, three guns, two heavy machine guns and up to a Nazi platoon. When our artillery shifted its fire into the depths of the enemy's defenses, Pyotr Barabanov was the first to break into Dulebino.

The fascists, who had taken refuge in the passages of communication, continued to snarl furiously. And then Pyotr Barabanov opened the hatch of the tower and shouted:

"Hey, infantry, tie this broken cannon to my car!" Now I will crush the Nazis like cockroaches.

The fighters tightened the bed with a cable, and the thirty-four dragged it along the course of the message. The German soldiers, of course, were also "run in" by tanks, but they must not have seen such a trick. However, it was not necessary to contemplate the drumming technique for a long time: some immediately remained lying lifeless, others, crippled and bloodied, jumped out of the communication channel and fell under the fire of the shooters, the rest fled at full speed to the opposite outskirts of Dulebin.

Ahead appeared a German tank with a frightening name "Tiger". The Tiger had already knocked out three of our tanks and was now aiming at Barabanov's car. Thirty-four times crushed another enemy cannon and, having made a small turn, took cover in its firing position. The crew of the tank continued to smash the Nazis. The soldiers of the platoon also beat them with carbines and machine guns. But then the "tiger" belched fieryly, the shell hit the turret of Lieutenant Barabanov's car, but it didn't penetrate any further.

In Rakitin's eyes the sky first blazed red, then the red mingled with yellow, green and black. The firmament revolved behind him, the earth swayed under his feet, and Rakitin fell, feeling a burning pain in his right thigh. But what about the platoon, company, tankers? Dulebino?..

Fiercely resisting, the enemy retreated from the banks of the Ors to the second line of defense, passing in front of

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village Znamenskoye, on the southern bank of the river

Nugr. But only a few "Tigers" and small groups of Nazi soldiers and officers managed to escape there. Dulebino became a grave for 700 fascists, a dump for 30 tanks, 80 guns, for many machine guns and machine guns. Red flags fluttered over the Dulebinsk huts again, blown by the warm July breeze. The red sun rose again for the people of Dulebin, and with it the cares dear to the heart for housing and bread returned.

"The tankers of the 127th TP," noted in the combat log of the 49th MBR, "went attack, with their fire and caterpillars they suppressed the fire system of the pr-ka at the forefront. The infantry and tanks, in close interaction of fire with the movement, destroyed the pr-ka at the forefront and at 11 o'clock. 30 min. captured Lunevo. Pr-k began to bypass Borovoye. Pursuing him, the tanks went to the north-west. env. Borovoe. The pr-k in Borovoye knocked out 4 T-34s. Tanks at 13.30 returned for the infantry in Lunevo. At 14.30, the 1st and 2nd Motor Rifle Battalions, together with the 127th Tank Guard, crossed the Vataka and captured Borovoe at 15.20.

At 15:00, 56 infantry regiments, together with 3 motorized rifle regiments, began to advance in the direction of Bessonovsky, but at 16:00 they were met with strong artillery and mortar fire and, having lost 12 tanks, were stopped.

At 16.00, the pr-k concentrated up to 20 tanks in the Suryanino region, after a massive artillery shelling by our units, these tanks along the Orel-Bolkhov highway were thrown at Luchki. We covered the left flank in time. At 20.00, as a result of a counterattack, pr-ka 1 and 2 motorized rifle brigade, 127 tr from Borovoye were driven out and entrenched at the height of the north-west. Borovoe.

On this day, Deputy com. 1 msb guards Captain Gorshkov, under artillery fire, raised the fighters to attack: "Guardsmen! For the Motherland, for Stalin, forward!" The voice of the beloved commander was heard by everyone. The Germans clung to advantageous lines, they brought up fresh forces, concentrating up to 10 tanks and an infantry battalion. Guards captain Gorshkov quickly contacted the AD commander

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Cit. based on the book: Radugin M. Insolence. Documentary story. - M., 1983. Section 3.

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Captain Noskov: "Friend! Give fire to the tanks, otherwise we will miss the moment of reprisal against them.

Artillerymen covered the tanks with powerful fire. Captain Gorshkov for the second time led the company into the attack, and again the Germans were driven back. An enemy mine exploded not far from the captain. Her fragment Guards. Captain Gorshkov was killed. Fighters with anger and revenge slew the enemy for their beloved officer. The battlefield was covered with piles of enemy dead bodies.

They buried him with honor, which was worthy of the faithful son of the Motherland, who until the last days held high honor

Stalin's Guard".

During the first day of fighting for the village of Borovoye, the losses of the brigade were in people: 64 killed, 240 wounded; in service: 12 T-34 tanks, 2 of which are irretrievable, one 76-mm gun and 2 vehicles?.

FROM THE DOCUMENTS OF THE FEDERAL MILITARY ARCHIVE
OF GERMANY:

"Top Secret 20th Panzer
Division

Operational department (1a). No. 807/43. 07/26/43. KNP
division - Skorodumka. Regarding
parts of the division.

Order No. 6

1. In the morning on 26.07. in the sector of the division, with the powerful support of tanks, a new major offensive was repelled to defeat our troops on the northern sector of the front of the Oryol Bulge.

Only within the range of the 20th Panzer Division, according to the latest estimates, 40 enemy tanks were destroyed, approximately the same number were destroyed by two neighboring divisions.

2. According to the order, the division must withdraw its right flank from the former front line of defense and retreat to

1 TsAMORF, f. 3346, op. 1, d. 3, l. 6. 2 Ibid., l. 7.

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next line: Ors - a ravine 500 m southwest of Voinovo (here - a junction with the left flank of the 25th motorized division) - 1 km northwest of Moiseevka - about 500 m north of Vetrovskaya - height 233.0 - height 221.2 (here - a joint with the right flank of the 10th motorized division).

3. These lines should be occupied by: the right - the 101st motorized regiment (18th TD), the left - the 59th motorized regiment.

The dividing line between the 59th and 101st motorized regiments:
Suryanino (north) - Shemyakino (center) - a lowland south of Voinovo - the western part of Konoplyanka (for the 101st regiment).

4. About relocation:

a) on 26.07 at 21.00 withdraw the fighting troops from the front line of defense; the detachments located in the rear, before 2 am on July 27, position the lines of defense;

6) the 59th motorized regiment must hold the heights west of Voinovo until the 18th tank division, moving south, crosses the river. Ors. The order to retreat from this position is given by the division.

5. Sapper companies must equip new positions and destroy all weapons located on the occupied terrain, primarily combat vehicles, as well as blow up crossings. Until 2 a.m. on July 27, the companies should be at the location of the division south of Suryanino

6. On coordinated joint actions.

The following remains at the disposal of the division: the 21st tank battalion (without the 2nd company) - in Suryanino; 2nd anti-tank division (captain von Rauchgaupt) of the 92nd artillery regiment - western outskirts of Selemenevo; tank-sapper battalion - not a zina south of Suryanino.

7. The 92nd Artillery Regiment leaves the battle after dark. At dawn, he should be ready to fire on the new defense sector. Direct the main blow to the area 233.0-221.2, as well as to the Voinovo region and to the south.

The interaction of artillery with both neighbors must be coordinated.

8. An additional order will be telegraphed about the departure of the transport.

9. The 112th Motorized Regiment must be reunited

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nits with the 18th tank regiment, and until the morning of 27.07 he must

tych of the Kalinino - Selemenevo - Gradunovka section. On

the following night, this regiment was to ensure the withdrawal of the 101st motorized regiment.

The 10.92nd anti-tank regiment provides radio communications.

11. KIP from the afternoon of July 26 - lowland to the south

Gryadunovka.

Distributor:

1st quartermaster officer of the 101st motorized regiment (18th TD)

Signature!.

Results of the first day of the battle

On this day, July 26, General Badanov limited himself to engaging in combat operations to break through the enemy defenses in the Karentyaevo-Prilepa-Lunevo-Mal sector of the front. Niello with a length of 9 km only two corps: the 6th Guards and the 11th Tank. The 30th, 5th and 25th tank corps and separate reinforcement units (for example, the 29th detachment, the 1st Guards Sap of the 6th Guards Mki, etc.) were in reserve.

In making this decision, General Badanov counted on the fact that the forces of his two formations, with the participation of three weakened rifle divisions of the 8th Guards Corps, would be able to break through the enemy defenses in the first hours of the battle, and then in the second half of the day to introduce the rest of the formations of his army group into the breakthrough. . As a result of such actions, by the end of the first day, or maybe on the second day, Badanov planned to reach the main communications of the enemy - the highway and railway in the Shakhovo-Khotynets section.

It should be noted that the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps, Lieutenant General A.I. Akimov was the largest unit in Badanov's army group. In terms of numbers, it was one and a half times (16,030 people) exceeded the tank corps of Radkevich (11th tank) and Rodina (30th tank). The armament of the guardsmen was also impressive: all three mechanized brigades (16th, 17th and 49th) had tanks. In addition, it included two separate tank regiments (29th and 56th), 1st

1 VA-MAVN 24-35/109.

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guards self-propelled artillery regiment and units that had anti-tank artillery.

If we sum up the results of the first and, as it seemed to everyone, from Stalin to Badanov, the decisive and turning point in the fighting for the Oryol strategic bridgehead, then the day of July 26 did not become such. The goals and objectives of the offensive were not fulfilled.

The breakthrough of the enemy's defenses and the exit of tank corps from its deep rear did not take place. Formations of the 11th Panzer Corps only approached the first line of defense and did not begin to storm it. Parts of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps broke into the first line to a shallow depth and secured individual nodes of enemy resistance: Lunevo, Borovoye, vys. 163.6, Voinovo and crossed the Ors River, thus marking the success of the offensive.

Considering the reasons that prevented the implementation

goals and objectives of the offensive, first of all, it should be noted that the Soviet command, as always, underestimated the strength and capabilities of the enemy side:

a) there was not enough information about the structure and composition of the group, its weapons;

6) the enemy's defense system was not opened.

In addition, the troops were brought in almost on the move, without intelligence about the enemy, and, most importantly, they had to break through the enemy defenses with their own formations, while this should not have been done by the divisions of the 8th Guards Rifle Corps.

To a large extent, the weather interfered with the advance of Soviet tankers.

FROM THE BATTLE REPORT OF THE WESTERN FRONT
HEADQUARTERS TO THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF

ON THE PROGRESS OF THE
OFFENSIVE: "July 27. 02 h 10
min 247
<...>

3. P-I guards. army. The troops of the army, continuing the offensive, in some areas moved forward. In the second half of the day, army units, together with the 4th Panzer Army

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captured the enemy strongholds Vetrovsky, Voinovo, Lunevo.

<:::>

5. 4th Panzer Army. Forces of 6 MK 11 TC at 12.00 26.7, together with units of 8 Guards. sc 11th Guards. army after artillery preparation attacked the enemy on the front Karentyayev, - Konoplyansky. The attacking units met an organized anti-tank defense system consisting of artillery, tanks and self-propelled guns. By the end of the day, parts of the tank army were:

AI mk - took possession of Bulgakovo and one brigade went to the Shemyakino - Dolbilovo road. 6th MK - captured Voinovo, Borovoe, Lunevo and repelled an enemy counterattack with a force of up to 20 tanks from the Luchansky direction. 30 tk - in the area of Kudi Novo, Kaverznevo, Aseeva.

5 shopping mall - in the former area.

On the morning of July 27, the 4th Panzer Army continues to carry out its assigned task.

<...>

7. 1st Air Army. Last night, the troops of the army did not conduct combat work due to bad weather. In the daytime, ground attack aircraft operated against the advancing troops on the left flank of the front, destroying enemy manpower and materiel. 260 sorties were made, up to 25 tanks and 150 vehicles were destroyed, 6 enemy artillery batteries were destroyed, dispersed and partially destroyed up to a battalion of his infantry. Aerial reconnaissance established the movement of enemy infantry and tanks along the roads from Pavlovsky Khutor to Gnezdilovo, Znamenskoye and further to Kuzminka. On this road, movement of up to 50 tanks and up to 150 vehicles was noted,

Enemy tanks were installed by aviation: in the areas of Bulgakov, Krasnaya Polyana, Zlyn, Strukovo - up to 230 tanks and up to 800 vehicles; in the first half of the day in the areas of Volosatovo, Ragozino, Pavlovsky Khutorov - up to 70 tanks and 300 vehicles; at the Ozerskaya airfield - 30 single aircraft

enemy aircraft. Combat operations of enemy aircraft during 26.7

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the front of the armies was not noted. Single planes conducted reconnaissance of the battlefield and close rear areas. 11 sorties were counted.

8. During the past day, heavy rains have been falling on the left wing of the front. The roads are in extremely poor condition for the movement of all types of transport and materiel.

9. The military council of the front - at the VPU.

Petrov ".

Second day

July 27, Tuesday. Weather: partly cloudy, slight improvement in weather conditions.

In order to develop the emerging success of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps and the 11th Tank Corps at 3 o'clock in the morning, from behind the left flank of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps, the commander of the 4th Tank Army brings the 30th Ural Volunteer Tank Corps into battle.

1st Panzer Corps

On the night of July 27, regrouping, the corps

General Radkevich continued to carry out the task previously assigned to him.

The corps commander gave a verbal order: "The 36th brigade of the 12th motorized rifle brigade advance in the direction of Krasny, bypassing Vetrovo from the north, and further to the northern outskirts of Rudnevo, with the task of reaching the line of the river by the end of the day. Tskan, capturing and securing the crossing.

65 brigade advance in the direction of elev. 221.2, southwestern outskirts of Vetrov, western outskirts of Rudnevo, with the task of reaching the line of the river by the end of the day. Tskan.

VI.00 On July 27, 1943, an artillery offensive began along the front line of the defense and against the artillery positions of the enemy.

Fulfilling the order, at 11.30 on July 27, 1943, parts of the corps set out in the indicated direction. During the day without

1 TsAMORF, f. 208, op. 2511, d. 2424, l. 437-439.

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holding infantry 26 and 83 guards. SD fought fierce battles for Gorki, Vetrov.

The enemy offered strong fire resistance from the directions: Shemyakino, Gorki, Vetrovo, Rudnevo.

At 15.50 on July 27, 1943, the enemy from the direction of Vetrov, with a force of up to a company and 5 tanks, counterattacked the battle formations of the 12th Motorized Rifle Brigade - the counterattack was repulsed, the enemy retreated to its original position.

Parts of the corps were repeatedly exposed to enemy bomber aircraft, in total there were 61 sorties during the day!

On July 27, at 10 o'clock, after regrouping, the 11th motorized rifle brigade again went on the offensive on Vetrovo. Repeated attacks by our infantry, supported by the tanks of the 20th and 36th tank brigades, which followed during the day, were not successful.

"The enemy, sensing our clear superiority in technology and manpower and the threat of our units reaching the high ground Bolkhov-Karachev, called in his aviation, which in groups of 12-25 aircraft continuously bombed our battle formations.

By the end of the day, a large tank battle unfolded in the area north of Vetrovo, which also could not decide the fate of Vetrovo.

"The 12th Motorized Rifle Brigade, in cooperation with the 36th Tank Brigade, captured Vetrovo. 65 brigade seized Gorki, but, having suffered losses, under the pressure of enemy counterattacks, the units were forced to retreat, the rest

viv these settlements.

During the night, the units put themselves in order and evacuated damaged military equipment from the battlefield.

Parts of the 36th Tank Brigade also took part in this battle. By the beginning of hostilities, the brigade had 1,144 personnel, armed with: PPSH assault rifles - 349, rifles - 370; light machine guns - 20, heavy machine guns - 4, DShK - 2, PTR - 24, 82-mm mortars - 6; guns 76 mm - 4.37 mm - 4; tanks T-34 - 32, T-70 - 2, armored personnel carriers - 3, motorcycles - 12, cars - 10653.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3412, op. 1, d.66, l. 5. 2 Ibid., f. 3371, op. 1, d. 12, l. 22. 3 Ibid., f. 3412, op. 1, d. 80, l. 19.

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In the battles for the strongholds of Vetrovo and Rudnevo on July 27, the 36th Tank Brigade had losses among its personnel and weapons.

26by on July 27, the formations of the 11th Panzer Corps had the following losses:

1. In personnel:

"12 MSBR - 52 people were killed, 188 people were injured.

20 brigade - 7 people were killed, 36 people were injured.

36 brigade - 20 people were killed, 30 people were injured.

65 brigade - 30 people were killed, 90 people were injured!

2. In the material part:

"20 brigade - T-34 tanks - 29; T-70 - 17.

36 brigade - T-34 tanks - 24; T-70 - 15.

65 brigade - T-34 tanks - 19; T-70 - 6.

1493 sap - SU - 122-59.

Tank losses were mainly from enemy anti-tank fire.

6th Guards Mechanized Corps

On July 27, the commander of the guard corps, Lieutenant General A.I. Akimov decided to bring his reserve into battle - the 17th Guards Mechanized Brigade.

He ordered: "17 mbr with a battery of 1 sap to advance in the direction of Aseevo, Lunevo, Voinovo with the task of seizing the road in the Suryanino-Utkin sector; in the future to master the crossings over the river. Nugr in sowing. parts of Bol. Black.

49 mbr with 56 tr and two batteries of 1 sap to advance in the direction of Voinovsky, Utkin with the task of seizing the road in the Kalininsky - 2nd Shchigrovsky section; in the future to master the crossings over the river. Nugr at the Rozhkovo-Voskresensky section.

16 mbr to advance behind 49 mbr with a ledge to the left, covering the left flank of the hull. 29 rp and 3 [battalion] 17 mbr - reserve, advance beyond 17 mbr.

17 mbr on the night of 27.07. moved to Rylovo district, Konop

1 TsAMORF, f. 3412, op. 1, d. 66, l. 6.2 Ibid.

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Iyanka and took up the starting position for the offensive. The 49th and 16th MBRs were on the lines reached the day before!

The offensive began at 11 o'clock. Already by 12 o'clock the 17th mechanized brigade of Colonel N.E. Shcherbakova captured Voinovo, but then, having met stubborn resistance from the enemy, she had no further success. Her repeated attacks at 16.00 and 20.00 also led to nothing.

Tankers and motorized riflemen of the 49th mechanized brigade of Lieutenant Colonel V.V. Jabot and the 56th Tank Regiment attached to it crossed the river. Ors and attacked from the east the stronghold of the enemy in the grove of the north-east. Moiseevka. The motorized riflemen of the 49th brigade, under heavy machine-gun, mortar and artillery fire, lay down and lagged behind the tanks (56 tank units), which, having lost 10 vehicles burned, retreated to their original position.

At 13.00, the corps commander, from behind the left flank of the 49th mechanized brigade, decided to bring into battle units of the 16th mechanized brigade, Colonel V.M. Artyemenko. The brigade went to the border of the river. Ors on the Bessonovsky - Dulebino section and, having met strong fire resistance from the southern bank of the river. Ors, had no further progress.

49th mechanized brigade

On the second day of the offensive, the brigade commander decided with the forces of the 127th and 56th tank regiments, hitting the enemy flank in the direction of the Dulebinsky settlement, to reach the Shemyakino settlement. To do this, a tank landing on tanks was being prepared, but due to strong artillery fire, the landing of the Natanka could not be landed.

"At 12.00, without shelling the front edge of the defense of the pr-ka, tanks of the 56th TP crossed the river. Ors. Tankers of the 127th TP are not

managed to cross the river, and they stopped in front of Yasnaya Polyana, firing from a place.

The infantry of the motorized rifle battalions rose behind the tanks of the 56th TP. The enemy, in order to cut it off from the tanks, opened a strong artillery fire. Our motorized riflemen lay down, and the tanks went ahead. At 12.30 the artillery of the pr-ka opened fire on the tanks, 12 tanks of the 56th TP caught fire. The rest of the tanks returned to their original positions.

At 19.00 the attack was repeated, but did not bring success. task

1 TsAMORF, f. 3434, op. 1, d.2, l.7.

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The brigade didn't complete the day!", – recorded in the combat log of the 49th Guards Mechanized Brigade.

During these first two days of the offensive, the tank crews of Major Selivanchik's 56th Tank Regiment played an active and even, judging by the combat log, the leading role in breaking through the enemy's first line of defense.

After a 25-kilometer march, by the evening of July 26, the regiment was in a waiting area - in a grove 200 m south of the village of Ivanovsky.

On the night of July 26, an order was received: "... in cooperation with the 49th MBR, to break through the defenses of the Lunevo-Borovoe avenue and seize the German defense strongholds of Lunevo, Borovoe, Voinovo and, further developing the success of the offensive, seize crossing - Resurrection ">.

"Regiment consisting of T-34 - 29 units, T-70 - 7 units. with the participation of a company of submachine gunners and a company of anti-tank rifles, by a detour, he broke the resistance of the pr-ka and captured the heavily fortified strongholds of the defense of pr-ka Lunevo and Borovoe "3.

The combat log of the 56th Separate Tank Regiment reflects the events of the second day of the battle on the banks of the Ors River in this way: "During the attack on the Voinovo settlement, the avenue, with a force of up to an infantry regiment with the support of artillery and 13 tanks, counterattacked the battle formations of the regiment twice. The counterattacks of the pr-ka were repulsed with great losses for him. After repulsing the counterattacks, the regiment, under the cover of artillery fire, crossing the Ors River and encircling the right, captured Voinovo, height 163.6, in battle, thereby ensuring the success of the 49 mbr offensive "*.

"In 2 days of fighting, the regiment lost:

a) burned T-34 - 5;

6) [burnt] T-70 - 2;

c) T-34s shot down - 6;

d) killed - 49 people;

e) wounded - 24 people.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3346, op. 1, d. 3, l. 8

? There, f. 118 Guards. tp, op. 240734 s, d. 1, l.9. 3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., l. 10.

5 Ibid., l. 11.11 (06.).

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FROM THE JOURNAL OF COMBAT
ACTIONS OF THE 10TH MOTORIZED DIVISION:

"07/27/43, Tuesday.

Purpose: defense.

Divisional command post - Bolishaya Chern

04.00. Morning report to the XXPT Army Corps.

During the night there were no active hostilities.

Artillery fire throughout the division.

05.30. The 41st Motorized Regiment reports: the offensive of the enemy infantry with tanks; an enemy attack, supported by three armored vehicles for the purpose of reconnaissance, was repulsed by blowing up one tank.

09.00. A lively movement is observed in front of the entire front of defense.

The 20th motorized regiment reports that there is up to one infantry battalion with tanks in front of the defense sector of the 110th mobile anti-tank battalion.

The 41st Motorized Regiment reports: 20 enemy tanks and infantry are concentrated in the lowlands.

09.05. The XXIII army corps informs Ta that the withdrawal from the front line of defense is postponed to the night of 28.07.

10.15. The corps commander arrived at the command post and discussed the forthcoming plans with the division commander.

10.25. Powerful defensive fire throughout the DIVISION area.

The arrival of enemy forces in the area northwest of Bulgakovo suggests that the main attack was directed precisely at this sector. Therefore, the division orders to regroup the forces of tank units in the area near the Tskan bridge to the north of Kuzminka.

10.45. The corps agrees to the supply of a tank company of the 20th sapper unit.

The division intends to transfer the company that has hitherto stood behind the 41st motorized regiment to the 20th motorized mupolka.

10.50. 20th Motorized Regiment reports: detected

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Enemy tanks located in front of the 110th anti-tank division's sector are moving to the right flank of the division along the lowland east of Stolbchee.

11.45. The 41st Motorized Regiment reports: infantry attacks on the regiment's sector have been repulsed.

12.45. The 41st Motorized Regiment reports that 40 tanks have been seen moving from Stolbchee to Krasny.

13.20. Interim report to the XX Army Corps.

In the early morning hours, the enemy was discovered at their starting positions in the lowland east of Stolbchee. Later, a significant concentration of enemy forces was observed in the area northwest of Bulgakovo.

Under the cover of artillery fire on the sector of the division, the enemy transferred these and new forces from the lowland (east of Stolbchee) to the north - to the junction of the flanks of the 10th motorized and 20th tank divisions.

By this moment, there is a busy movement from Yachnoye to Stolbchee, 40 tanks are approaching from Stolbchee to Krasny.

At their starting positions south of Bulgakovo, air hunters ("]. S.-Retseg" - N\$ 129 V-1 and Yu-87 S-1) destroyed about 20 tanks.

13.35. The 41st motorized regiment reports: the left flank of the 20th Panzer Division is forced to leave the front line of defense.

The division command decides to place a sapper company at the disposal of the 41st Motorized Regiment to strengthen the right flank.

19.05. The order of the operational department of the headquarters of the corps: to redeploy the armored units of the Zimmermann group in Rudnevo to stabilize the situation at the junction with

20th Panzer Division.

All anti-tank guns of the 18th Panzer Division (done on the night of July 27) are on alert.

19.15. A day's report to the XXIII Army Corps.

In the early morning hours, a reconnaissance attack was repulsed in front of the 41st motorized regiment, supported by 3 tanks, one of which was blown up.

In front of Bulgakovo, the hunters with tanks "J).S.-Eetseg" destroyed 20 tanks with infantry at the starting position.

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Under the cover of artillery fire on the positions of the division, the enemy continued the offensive.

Attacks by the forces of the company or battalion, supported by tanks, were repulsed.

An afternoon dive-bomber raid on the lowlands east of Stolbchee appears to have been successful.

The initial enemy artillery positions reported to the division in the lowland north of Yachnoye were not destroyed.

Late at night, a continuous approach of reinforcements was again observed: tanks, artillery and infantry from the Yachnoye area to the Stolbchee and Krasny areas. Thus, the direction of the main attack was clearly marked - in front of the left flank of the 20th Panzer Division.

The enemy assault aircraft at low level dropped bombs on the highway and temporary shelters in the division's defense zone.

Low level of activity of own fighters.

20.30. The Zimmermann combat group, together with a tank subunit, is conducting an offensive in the Vetrovo area in the area with elevation marks 233.0-221.2, where the enemy has broken through. Altitude 233.0 should be captured tonight.

The 21st Panzer Regiment of the 20th Panzer Division is currently engaged in combat with enemy tank forces around Hill 233.0, while Hill 221.2 is firmly held by the 10th Motorized Division.

The planned attack of the Russians did not take place due to darkness, so the Zimmermann battle group is grouped in the area east of Vetrovo, so that on 28.07

to break the alleged enemy tank attack.

22.20. The division commander analyzes the current situation with the unit commanders and points out that new powerful attacks should be expected the next morning.

1 VA-MAVN 26-23/124.

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30th Ural Volunteer Tank Corps

It so happened that the 30th Ural Volunteer Corps, which was discussed earlier, took part in the battles for the village of Borilovo. The local population knows about the colossal losses of this corps in the Borilovsky battle, because the fighting took place in front of these people, because they were not evacuated in advance, as was usually done in the front line. The people's rumor about the battle spread far and wide, and most of the inhabitants, not knowing the frontline situation, came to the conclusion that the corps commander, General Rodin, was to blame for this "tank battle". In fact, everything was much more complicated. As we already know from the memoirs of the commander of the 3rd Army, General Gorbатов, the commanders of divisions, corps, and armies in a combat situation were in a position where it was impossible to change the situation or make significant adjustments to the course of hostilities. Almost nothing depended on them - everything was written down with directives and orders: do it and don't think about it. It is impossible to stop the offensive, it is impossible to retreat, to make a maneuver in battle - you need to coordinate this with a whole series of higher authorities. What was left for commanders and commanders? To push, to hurry, to beg, to beg: come on, guys, come on! From time to time throw up artillery "fire", ask higher commanders to help with aviation. So it was here. The introduction of the tank army was monitored by all the authorities in the huge pyramid of military and political power, from the commander of the army to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. And everyone was waiting for good news and subsequent awards. And here is a terrible disappointment. In essence, an entire tank army has been destroyed. How could this happen? Is this the first and last time? So, at the end of February 1943, Rybalko's 3rd Panzer Army almost completely "burnt down" near Kharkov. On July 12, 1943, before reaching Prokhorovka, Rotmistrov's 5th tank army ALMOST COMPLETELY "disappeared in dust, smoke and fire". By this time, on the eastern direction, when moving from Novosil to Orel, at the turn of the Oleshnya River, "they were blown up by mines, burned down from aviation

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bombs", exploded from direct hits of shells fired from German tanks, assault and anti-aircraft guns

diy, tanks of the same 3rd tank army of the future twice Hero of the Soviet Union Guard Colonel General Pavel Semenovich Rybalko.

The answer to the question: why did Soviet tanks burn so often and in large quantities, we will give a little later. And now we will analyze the Borilov battle in detail, using the example of the participation of the 30th tank corps in it. The sparse and compressed information of the combat log gives us such an opportunity. Let us turn to those days when on the banks of the Ors and Nugr rivers, brave Uralians burned, exploded and shattered to pieces along with their armor. The laconic records of the reporting document allow us to find out the chronology of the hostilities that unfolded in the last days of an unusually cold and rainy July (average temperature - 19.2 degrees Celsius). And the memories of the participants in the battle will complement the pictures of the tense days of the grandiose battle.

On July 26 and 27, as already mentioned, parts of the corps made a march and concentrated in the initial area to enter the breakthrough. Due to heavy rains, units and formations moved slowly along the route, along broken roads, over ravine-crossed terrain, which greatly slowed down movement. It was necessary to equip crossings and improve the patency of some sections of roads. The limited number of roads to the front line made it impossible to quickly concentrate, in addition, units and formations of the corps made night marches for the first time.

The 30th motorized rifle brigade, due to the shortage of wheeled vehicles, made the transition on foot (from Kozelsk to the battlefield - 100 km. - E. Shch.).

On the night of July 26-27, 1943, and in the morning of that day, formations and parts of the corps approached the initial area to enter the breakthrough. But due to the fact that the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps did not make a breakthrough, at 16.30 an order was received: to overtake the motorized infantry and advance on its sector.

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Only one and a half hours were allotted for preparation for the offensive.

Although the corps had the task (being in the second entelon) in case of failure of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps - to overtake it and act in its directions, nevertheless, formations and units were focused on entering the breakthrough, based on this, combat in rows.

"By the time of the hostilities, the corps had the following combat strength: T-34 tanks - 202, T-70 tanks - 7, self-propelled guns 122-mm - 16, armored vehicles - 68, anti-tank guns 85-mm - 12, rocket launchers M-13 - 8; guns 76 mm - 24, 45 mm - 32, 57 mm - 16; mortars 120 mm - 42, 82 mm - 52;

wheeled vehicles of all brands - 1028.

On July 27, 1943, at 16:00, the corps commander received an oral combat order from the commander of the 4th TA troops: due to the fact that Guards. MK indecisively moves forward - to overtake its battle formations and develop success in the following directions:

a) Suryanino, Bol. Black;

6) Odnoshchekino, Zlyn.

18.45. 243 brigade, in cooperation with 1513 iptap and 1621 saps of the initial area of Lunevo, advanced in the direction of Voinovo, Suryanino, Rozhkov, with the immediate task of capturing Suryanino, in the future - Rozhkov.

Having met stubborn resistance from the enemy, the brigade fought for five hours and reached the line: Vetrovsky - Voinovo, while suffering the following losses:

T-34 tanks: burned down - 4, knocked out - 6;

personnel: killed - 10, wounded - 18, missing - 9.

During the offensive at 20.00, the brigade was attacked by enemy aircraft in the amount of 12 Yu-87 aircraft and suffered losses in personnel and tanks.

On July 27, 1943, at 24:00, the brigade withdrew to its original positions in the Lunevo district.

17.30. 197 brigade with 742 lptdn and a battery of 1621 SAP received a combat order: to overtake the battle formations of 16 MSBR 6 Guards. we will develop its success in the direction of Zeleniye Luzhki, Lucan

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sky, Shchigry, Strukovo, Odnoshchekino, Sukhochevo, Voskresensky.

Overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy, the GPZ [head marching outpost] of the brigade drove the enemy from the Kazansky-Luchansky line and, pushing him in a southerly direction, approached the northern beret of the river. Ors.

The brigade at the turn of Kazansky - Luchansky turned around for battle and launched an offensive for mastering the crossings on the river. Ors at the Bessonovsky site, Dulebino.

Approaching the northern beret of the river. Ors, the tanks of the brigade stopped and entered into battle with the enemy, firing from the spot and at the same time suffering losses in tanks from aimed direct shots of enemy artillery.

Conducting a firefight, the brigade ensured the crossing of the 30th Motorized Rifle Brigade to the southern bank of the river. Ors'.

Here is how Vasily Ivanovich Zaitsev, a participant in this battle, who later became a Hero of the Soviet Union, describes the first days of the offensive: "Our 197th Sverdlovsk Tank Brigade, operating in the first echelon of the corps, at 16.00 went forward to the Ors River. Major Rakhmatulin's 1st tank battalion was advancing ahead with submachine guns from Captain Firsov's battalion on the armor of the tanks. On approaching the village of Bessonovka, the battalion came under heavy enemy artillery fire. A direct hit knocked out the battalion commander's tank. Major Rahma Tulin died. Battalion Hero of the Soviet Union Vasily Zaitsev submachine gunners in command

1 TsAMORF, f. 30 UDTK, op. 1, d. 34, l. 5.

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de captain Firsov dismounted and led the attack on Bessonovka. The head tank company of the 1st tank battalion supported the actions of the submachine gunners' battalion. Submachine gunners and tankmen left the kreke Ors by nightfall. The tankers could not overcome the water barrier on the move, this was prevented by the steep bank and the muddy bottom of the river. The command of the brigade assigned the battalion of submachine gunners the task of forcing the Ors River, capturing the village of Bessonovka, and establishing a crossing for tanks.

On the night of July 27-28, separate groups of machine gunners crossed the river. So, eight fighters of the squad of senior sergeant Kompaneets from the company of senior lieutenant Nikolaev broke into the very center of the German defense, destroyed a machine-gun crew, two snipers, captured four soldiers and, having taken up all-round defense in the enemy's trench, held him until the main forces approached battalion.

During the first half of the day on July 28, as a result of the joint heroic efforts of Firsov's battalion and the automatiches of the 30th motorized rifle brigade, supported by the fire of tankers and artillerymen, it was possible to complete the crossing of the Ors River. The first to cross the river was a company of submachine gunners of Senior Lieutenant Nikolaev. In this battle, Vadim Ocheretin, Komsomol organizer of the company, boldly and proactively acted. Having moved to the southern bank of the river, he helped the sappers to establish a crossing for the tanks. When the bridge was ready, the tank was the first to cross to the opposite bank.

platoon of lieutenant Diky!

21.00. The 30th Motorized Rifle Brigade from the 299th Min. Regiment, having deployed at the Kazansky-Luchansky line, under the cover of the tanks of the 197th Tank Brigade, entered the battle to seize the crossings on the river. Ors on the site Bessonovsky, Dulebino.

The enemy, having a water barrier ahead and dominating heights, prepared a solid defense in advance: trenches, bunkers, minefields and, in some places, trenches. The front line was saturated with medium-caliber artillery.

The personnel went on the attack boldly and zealously, but not

! Zaitsev V.I. Guards tank. - Sverdlovsk: Middle Ural book publishing house, 1989. Pp. 17.

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seize the rights to the
river. NUGR.

29.7.4383 From 6.00 Kortsus 4.00 go
to time

relative incline: Lenke
to the right: lefty: single
KINV, SUKHOICHEVO
TO SERESENSKY. ,

1

|

Phishing of combat debauchery "

4. As a result of partial precipitation, the roads made
it difficult for wheeled vehicles to move.

5. Quick entry into battle of formations and parts of the
hull without sufficient preparation
tovki.

6. Missing Moment of suddenness.

Positive moments, conducive to

tion for the implementation of 6 tasks:

1. The personnel went into battle boldly and decisively.

8. No interruptions in the transport of ammunition and fuel.

3. Orromnoe desire of the commanders for victory.

At 0400, the commander of the kortsus gave up the battle sign No. 8.

ORDER IDEA:

The data center, with the cover of 30 MSBR and equipment of 197 brigade tweek brigades, cross the river oros by 6.00 to start a decisive offensive in the direction:
ODNONEKIN &, SUKHOCHEVO VO SKRESENSKY m on the shoulders of the retreating enemy to force the Nugra River, preventing him from organizing defense along the south bank of the Ors River.

K 6.C0 197 and 243 tbr in the district;
„ VESSRNRVSKII, DULEBINSEKIA crossed the river Ors
12 crossings by sashers 743 sapb.

In connection with the rainfall, the ZOMSbr foreted the river. ors and subsequently acted on foot.

Fulfilling the order of the corps commander and not looking at the fact that there was a strong Dond, 243 brigade and 30 MSBr and 197 7 brigade resolutely led the offensive and by 5.00 ovhadev ODNOSCHEKIN, SUKHOCHEVO KO DONTAEVO approached the north bank of the VUGR river in the sector in SKRESENSKY, KUKHIKI.

Order 2 No. 848

A page from the combat log of the 30th UDTK (document of TsAMO RF)

having combat experience, did not use the terrain enough, poorly maneuvered on the battlefield. As a result, subsection

corps often suffered unjustified losses.

The reason that the enemy was able to delay the advance of our units was also the situation in which command and control in the brigades was insufficiently organized, and communication between the brigade headquarters and the battalions was interrupted.

As a result, the corps received information late, and the corps commander was forced to follow the battle formations of the advanced brigades with his task force.

The disadvantage of the first day of the offensive of the corps was that the brigades, having overtaken the battle formations of the 6th Guards Mechanized Corps, did not have enough time to conduct reconnaissance, and advanced on the move.

We learn about the events of this first combat day of the corps from the memoirs of the commander of the 30th Ural Volunteer Tank Corps, Lieutenant General G.S. Homeland:

"On July 27, the commander of the front, Colonel-General V.D., arrived in the area of the village of Gremucheye. Sokolovsky and a member of the Military Council, Lieutenant General N.A. Bulganin. It was pouring with rain, and my car was struggling along the muddy, muddy road. Even from a distance, I noticed that on the thin face of the commander there was a stamp of great concern and concentration, deep reflection and fatigue.

The commander asked to report the situation. he was interested in the mood of the fighters and commanders, the combat readiness of the units, our awareness of the enemy. I reported that the corps was ready to carry out a combat mission.

"That's good," V.D. remarked. Sokolovsky, referring to the map. It was noticeable that the commander was seriously worried. Our corps was faced with the task of entering the gap in the sector of the 11th Guards Army. Then it was supposed, having cut off enemy communications, to reach the Hotynen-Naryshkino-Bunino line. This created the conditions for the encirclement of the Oryol-Bolkhov grouping of the enemy.

However, anticipating a strike in the direction of Bryansk, the Nazi command urgently transferred tanks to the Bolkhov area.

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SS division "Grossdeutschland" In front of the front of our corps were also an officer volunteer battalion, the 25th mechanized and 18th tank divisions, as well as a number of engineering, artillery and other units and formations. In addition, according to our intelligence, the enemy could at any time throw into battle more than four tank, mechanized and infantry divisions that were in reserve. (My italics. - E. Shch. Author's note. There are many inaccuracies in this paragraph I have highlighted. In particular, G.S. Rodin made the same mistakes regarding "Great Germany" as

THEIR. Bagramyan. Now about the reserves. By that time, the enemy had already used all the reserves. They were brought into battle by the German command to repel the offensive of the Badanov tank group, which included the 30th UDTK. I don't know anything about the officers' volunteer battalion. Probably, Rodin had in mind separate grenadier battalions from the Manteuffel group, designed to fight tanks and armed with faustpatrons. Previously, as part of the XXXX Corps, they fought in the south of the Orlovsky bridgehead, and then they were transferred together with the tank divisions of this corps to the northwest of Bolkhov.)

The soldiers of the 6th mechanized corps, who launched the offensive, shot down the enemy at the turn of Luchka - Stolbchee, but, advancing in the direction of Prilepa, Lunevo, they met fierce resistance from the Nazis and managed to go no more than four kilometers. The slow advance disturbed the front commander. He ordered at 16.00 on July 27 to bring into battle the 243rd tank brigade of Lieutenant Colonel V.N. Prikhodko, in order to overcome the Ors River by common efforts. And half an hour later he ordered the rest of General Badanov to be brought into battle.

It was decided to carry out this input along two routes. The 243rd Perm tank brigade with reinforcements was moving in the direction of the settlements of Luchki, Dulebino, Rozhkovo, Lokna, Bunino with the task of reaching the Alekseevka-Selikhovo line. The 244th Chelyabinsk Tank Brigade followed in order to get into the railway area. platforms of the poor.

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In the course of repelling an enemy counterattack in this area, the gunner-radio operator of the 244th tank brigade, Lieutenant Colonel M.G., performed a feat. Fomichev - Sergeant Dmitry Niko laev.

When his tank was knocked out, he took a comfortable position and accurately hit the enemy with a machine gun. The Nazis decided to take the daredevil alive. Nikolaev fired back to the last bullet, and when the ammunition ran out, he blew himself up with a grenade along with the enemies surrounding him.

The 197th Sverdlovsk Tank Brigade was moving along the Rogozin, Palno, Khotetovo, Borilovo, Zlyn, Paramonovo, Naryshkino lines. And the 30th motorized rifle brigade with the 299th mortar regiment was given the task of reaching the area of the settlements of Apraksino and Ledno.

The Urals struck the first blow at enemy fortifications on the Ors River. The Nazis responded with countermeasures. Everything in the circle hummed and groaned. It looked like a mighty volcano was erupting. The fields were covered with black clouds of smoke and stench. Even the rays of the sun could not penetrate through them. Villages were on fire. Dozens of fascist sa

moletov.

An attempt by the tankers to overcome the water barrier on the move failed. It was repeated on the morning of 28 July. A fierce battle lasted for several hours. The Nazis put up fierce resistance. However, by the middle of the day, the fascist for the elephants were shot down. The first to ford the river was the motorized rifle battalion of the 197th Tank Brigade under the command of Captain V.Ya. Firsov. The battalion stormed the village of Dulebinskaya, and the battalion commander himself destroyed 15 Nazis in this battle. At the same time, the third battalion of the 30th motorized rifle brigade under the command of Captain Ya.D. Gatsulyaka captured the northern outskirts of the village of Strukovo.

Suddenly, a report arrived at the corps headquarters saying that the Germans had used self-propelled torpedoes weighing about two hundred kilograms each against our tanks. They were hidden in tall grass and directed at the target with the help of electric or radio control. At first, our tankers did not know what this thing was, and, seeing that it did not

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opens fire, rammed it with powerful armor "thirty verki". The crew paid for this with their lives!

Emergency measures were taken, and the secret of the "new" weapon became known to us. By special order, we forbade all crews from ramming guided torpedoes. They should have been shot. The full effect was also achieved if the wire that trailed behind the torpedo was cut from behind. Within a few days, all our soldiers followed this order exactly, and another fascist adventure burst like a soap bubble.

The Nazis launched a series of new furious counterattacks and, at the cost of heavy losses, managed to achieve some success. However, with a united concentrated blow, the soldiers of Captain Firsov again took possession of the crossing and by evening occupied the villages of Bessonovskaya and Dulebino. Building on success, the 30th motorized rifle brigade expanded the bridgehead and ensured the transfer of tank units across the river. The Urals fought for every meter of their native land with unprecedented persistence and courage, showing miracles of heroism, courage, mutual assistance and selfless devotion to the Motherland.

Twice passed from hand to hand the village of Strukovo. A company commanded by Senior Lieutenant Gaiko fought for her release. Bursting into the trenches of the enemy, the fighters engaged in hand-to-hand combat and destroyed quite a few fascists. Gitle Rivne sent reinforcements here.

The commander of the battalion, Captain Ya.D., came to our aid with his reserve. Gatsulyak. The battalion commander himself smashed the Nazis with fire and the butt of a machine gun. In this battle, he received nine wounds, but left the battle formations only when the forces left the brave man.

The seriously wounded captain Gatsulyak was dying in the arms of his fighters. He asked the command to mark his soldiers with government awards and called them by their names.

Among those named by the fearless battalion commander was Zhenya Bezgodova, a sanitary instructor, Komsomol member, foreman of one of the Sverdlovsk factories. She really deserves

1 Author's note. These are self-propelled tankettes of the "Goliath" type of the 313th and 314th remote control companies XXXX] of the tank corps.

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lived awards. In a fierce battle, the commander was wounded. Hearing his moans, the brave girl rushed to help. The Nazi soldier opened fire on her. Zhenya was wounded, but did not retreat.

Results of the second day of the battle

The second day of the offensive of Badanov's tankers in the Borilovsky direction did not bring tangible and desired results.

So, on this day, the Soviet command brought into combat all the formations of the Badanov shock group.

Taking into account the insignificant losses of the first day of the battle, about 700 tanks and self-propelled artillery guns entered the battle.

During the day, Badanov's troops fought stubborn battles with the 10th and 25th motorized and 9th, 18th, 20th tank divisions of the enemy, having in front of the offensive front, in addition to powerful anti-tank defense, very rugged terrain and over 300 tanks and self-propelled enemy artillery pieces.

Thus, more than one thousand units of armored vehicles were involved in the fighting in the 17-20 km section.

By the end of the day, Soviet tankers, "breaking through the enemy's defenses, overcoming his resistance, reached the Vetrovo-Voinovo-Sharikhino line and further on the northern bank of the Ors River">?. To be more precise, this solid defense of the enemy was "gnawed through" only in certain areas. In general, not a big river, but with a deep canyon and in some open places with a swampy floodplain, became an insurmountable obstacle for our tankers during these two days.

Let's try to answer why this happened.

By the beginning of the operation, already knowing for sure that in this direction, in order to break through the defense, encircle the Bolkhovs-

and cutting off the Oryol groupings, ours is moving

! Rodin G.S. I follow the past. - Tula: Priokskoye book publishing house, 1968. Pp. 189-190.

2 TsAMORF, f. 323, op. 4756, d.4, l. 1-11.

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tank armada, the German command from the depths to the front line pulled up their mobile reserves - in particular, anti-tank assault divisions, which strengthened the nodal strongholds with their presence.

Even with the introduction of a fresh corps of Ural tankers, counting 225 steel vehicles, the situation did not change on the second day - there was no turning point.

It should be borne in mind that the commander of the 4th Panzer Army, General Badanov, as well as the commanders of the corps, introduced formations in parts, leaving the corps or brigade respectively in reserve. On the first day, the 30th Tank Corps and the 16th Guards Mechanized Brigade did not participate in the battles.

The command of all levels (army, corps and brigade) was focused on entering the breakthrough. In fact, it turned out that the formations of the Badanov group had to "break through the enemy's defenses on the move."

Tankers and motorized riflemen, who stormed the first line of defense of the enemy, turned out to be absolutely unprotected from the air. Our valiant aircraft appeared over the battlefield only occasionally. The German command, feeling "the imminent threat of our units reaching the high ground Bolkhov-Karachev, called in its aviation, which in groups of 12-25 aircraft continuously bombed our battle formations."

Insufficient experience in organizing and cooperating in combat operations of such a huge scale, in which artillery, motorized rifle and

tank units.

The disadvantage of the first days of the offensive was that the reconnaissance departments of the headquarters did not have enough time to conduct reconnaissance, and they attacked the enemy almost blindly - on the move and straightforwardly, without using maneuver - a tactical technique necessary in battle.

As a result, "during the night, day and night of July 28, the brigades of the corps, having come into close contact with the enemy, cross the river. Ors couldn't!

1 Ibid., f. 30 UDTK, op. 1, d. 34, l. 5(0b.).

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Day three

July 28, Wednesday. Weather: in the first half of the day there is a short temporary improvement in weather conditions, in the second half of the day there are showers.

Kutru on July 28, the formations of the 4th Panzer Army were at the lines:

"1 1TK - Vetrovo - Shemyakinsky,

bgv. MK - Shamyakino - Dulebinsky,

ZO TK - mastered Luchki, Kazansky, Luchansky and left kr. Ors at the turn of Dulebino - Ors.

On the night of 27 to 28.7, the enemy counterattacked tanks from the depths, knocking down parts of 11 TK, captured Gorki, Vetrovo.

During the day on July 28, the enemy, having brought up reserves from the depths, repeatedly went over to counterattacks from the line:

a) to an infantry regiment with 30 tanks from the Rudnevo area in the direction of Vetrovsky;

6) up to 2 infantry battalions with 30 tanks from Suryanino in the direction of Shamyakino;

c) up to an infantry battalion with 10-15 tanks from the Dule Bina area in the direction of Luchansky.

All these counterattacking enemy groups were reinforced by 5-7 assault guns, and their actions were supported by aviation, which continuously bombed the combat formations of our troops.

Having repelled all the enemy counterattacks, the army troops by decisive actions broke through the enemy defenses and by the end of the day captured:

bgv. MK - Shamyakino, Dulebinsky,

ITK - Vetrovo, Shemyakinsky,

5 Guards MK - Big Chern. (So the document, apparently, means the 5th shopping mall) "I.

5th Panzer Corps

In accordance with the plan of action for the introduction of Badanov's tank group into the breakthrough, the 5th tank corps, before July 27,

moved in the second echelon and moved behind Sakhno's 11th Panzer Corps.

1 TsAMO RF, f. 4756, d. 12, l. 10-11.

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5th motorized rifle brigade

On July 27, the 5th motorized rifle brigade was replenished in the forest area 500 meters west of Krutitsky. Before that, during the period of fighting in the second decade of July, the brigade suffered losses: 78 percent in personnel, up to 50 percent in weapons, and up to 25 percent in vehicles.

By the beginning of the new offensive, the combat and numerical strength of the brigade totaled only 750 out of 2472 people, or 30 percent, and 329 fighters were in artillery and mortar units.

Nevertheless, on the evening of July 27, an order was received for a joint offensive by easel brigades.

24th tank brigade

We learn about how the motorized riflemen and tankers of the 24th Tank Brigade fought on Oryol Land from the historical form of the 5th Tank Corps.

"... Models of heroic struggle were shown by privates, sergeants and officers in the sowing district. Eagle. The personnel fought hard. Tankers engaged in single combat with enemy tanks, artillery and submachine gunners, were continuously under the influence of massive enemy air raids, but morale did not decrease, but rather increased every day. Pod Staritsa, Gorodok, Stolbchee, Red, Bol. Black, Cr. Sadok, Cr. Gora, Lebedyansky dozens of fighters and commanders distinguished themselves in battles.

The commander of the vehicle, Lieutenant Mozharovsky, and the driver, Art. Horns in the battle near Gorodok acted boldly. The enemy battery fired directly at our tanks. Mozharovsky and Rogov went into the flank and attacked the enemy battery at top speed, crushing it along with the calculation.

The foreman of the SME company comrade. Karagodin with PTR entered into combat with the enemy tank T-4. Tov. Karagodin died a hero's death, but the tank was disabled.

The commander of the T-34 tank, Lieutenant Shustov, and the driver Nurdinov, in one battle, destroyed 4 anti-tank guns and a lot of enemy infantry. When shells and cartridges were used up, they continued to fight with grenades and crushed the enemy with tank tracks.

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The commander of the tower communist Glimbotsky in the battles of the sowing. Orla went 11 times to attack and 7 times to reconnaissance. During one attack, when the tank commander and gunner-radio operator, Comrade. Glimbotsky took command and, together with the driver, continued to fight. Brave tankers destroyed a self-propelled gun, 2 anti-tank guns and many soldiers and officers. During the reconnaissance of the Lebedyansky district, German fighters surrounded the tank and tried to set it on fire. Tov. Glimbotsky and Lebsky opened hatches and bombarded the fighters with grenades.

Tank commander lieutenant Varenitsa, driver st. sergeant Stolyarov, tower commander sergeant Ulov and gunner-radio operator Art. Sergeant Orlov fought bravely and courageously. The crew went on the attack 11 times, twice the tank was put out of action by enemy artillery fire, but the crew restored it, continuing to fight. During the fighting in the district of Staritsa, Gorodok, Stolbchee, the crew destroyed 4 tanks, a self-propelled gun, 3 anti-tank guns, a vehicle with enemy infantry, a cart with ammunition and 2 machine-gun points.

Brigade commander, favorite and father of all personnel, a talented officer of the Red Army Guards. Colonel Sytnik V.V. skillfully led all the fighting.

In the battles of sowing. Orla, being himself a guardsman, led the brigade forward like a guardsman, with bold and daring detours forcing the enemy to a hasty retreat and inflicting heavy losses on him.

In the battles for vil. Vyazovaya, being directly in combat formations, during the counterattack of the enemy guards Colonel Sytnik V.V. died the death of the brave for the great homeland, leaving an immortal memory of the people's hero.

41st Tank Brigade

The commander of the 5th tank corps, Major General Sakhno, set the following task: the 41st brigade as part of the corps to operate in the direction of Yachnoe, Yachny, Stolbchee, Karentyaevo, Khomyakovo, Kurchaki, Glotovo, Volosatovo, Krasnaya Polyana, Khokhlovka, Khotynets and go to the Kukuevka, Obraztsovo area, in readiness to act south-southwest.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3404, op. 1, d. 1, l.97-98.

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At that time, the 41st brigade was located in the area of the settlement of Dvoriki and was replenished with personnel and materiel.

"At 18.00 on 28.7.43, units of the brigade from the marching area, at the signal of the corps commander, went on the offensive.

Overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy and destroying his equipment, the brigade captured Vetrovo, Vetrovsky, Rudnevo, cut the Bolkhov-Khotynets road, crossed the river. Nugry took possession of the settlements: Rozhkovo, Sko rodumka, Krasny Salok and Krasnaya Zarya!

70th tank brigade

In the afternoon of July 27, General Sakhno gave the order: from the starting positions, sowing. Columnar advance in the direction of Vetrovsky, Krivusha, Rozhkovo with the immediate task of capturing Rudnevo, thereby cutting the Bolkhov-Khotynets highway, and seizing the crossing on the river. Nugr.

The combat composition of the 70th brigade had 53 tanks, of which: M4-A-2 - 29, MK-3 - 19, T-34 - 5 pcs.².

At 19.45, the units attacked and met strong artillery fire from the village of Voinovo and from a height southeast of Vetrovsky. The enemy, attacked by armored assault tanks, dropped their weapons and began to retreat in disarray, hiding in the rye.

Some time later, it was ordered: the tanks immediately return to the hollow southeast of Yachny, bury the tanks during the night and be ready to repel enemy counterattacks.

Vloshchina south of Shemyakino, the enemy concentrated up to 30 tanks.

At noon on July 28, the enemy launched a counterattack, which was repulsed by artillery fire.

At 18 o'clock an order was received: the brigade was to advance in the direction of Vetrovsky - Rudnevo - Krivusha. The next task is to capture Rudnevo.

At 19:00, the brigade attacked from its original positions.

Outside the high 233.0 - Vetrovo tanks met strong fire resistance. The enemy, leaving 4 tanks no further south than the Kolos settlement, began to retreat to Rudnevo. Our tanks

1 Ibid., d. 68, l. 33.2? TsAMORF,
f. 70sbr, op. 1, d. 1, l. 41.

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The troops knocked the enemy down from the line of defense and occupied the Krivush settlement at 6 o'clock in the morning. The bridge across the Nugr was blown up. An attempt to take the crossing on the move failed.

During the first two days of fighting, the brigade irrevocably lost tanks: M4-A-2 - 13 units, MK-3 - 5 units. In addition, 11 more tanks were knocked out. Losses among tank crews

were: killed - 17, wounded - 63, missing - 14 people.

11th Panzer Corps

Continuing to fulfill the assigned task, parts of the corps of General Radkevich continued to conduct an offensive in the direction of Vetrovo and Rudnevo.

It is known that on the evening of the second day of the offensive, a tank battle began on the approaches to the key stronghold of Vetrovo, in which a large number of armored vehicles took part on both sides.

Due to the fact that the infantry of the 26th and 83rd Guards Rifle Divisions did not support the offensive of the tankers of the 11th Corps, parts of the corps were not successful in the battles of the third day.

At 11.30 the enemy with 30 tanks and up to an infantry battalion counterattacked from Rudnevo in the direction of Vetrovo. The counter attack was repulsed.

“As a result of the battle, 10 enemy tanks were destroyed. Vetrovo remained in the hands of the corps, which made it possible to start introducing 5 TC into the breakthrough and turn private success into a general offensive.

On this day, by order of the corps commander, the 36th tank brigade was replenished with 20 T-34 tanks from the technical reserve of the corps, which were immediately thrown behind the 5th tank corps to develop success.

At 7 p.m., after putting the parts of the corps in order, in cooperation with units of the 26th and 83rd Guards Rifle Divisions and the 70th Tank Brigade (5th TC), united

1 NAMORPH, f. 70sbr, op. 1, d. 1, l. 42. 2 Ibid., f. 3412, op. 1, d. 66, l. 6.

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units of the 11th Panzer Corps went on the offensive in the general direction of Vetrovo, Rudnevo and, overcoming stubborn resistance, broke into Rudnevo.

“During the battle, the troops of the corps were repeatedly exposed to enemy aircraft - in groups of 12-25 aircraft (a total of 190 sorties).

During the first three days of fighting (July 26, 27 and 28) the corps suffered the following losses.

In the material part:

12 MSBR - rifles - 157, PPSH - 351, machine tool. machine guns - 17, manual. machine guns - 20, PTR - 32;

20 tank brigade - T-34 tanks - 30, T-70 - 17;

65 brigade - tanks T-34 - 21, T-70 - 6;

Zb tbr - tanks T-34 - 45, T-70 - 20;

1493 sap - SU - 122-9.

Personal composition:

12 MSBR - killed - 298 people, wounded - 1180 people.

20 brigade - killed - 72 people, wounded - 70 people, missing without lead - 182 people.

65 brigade - killed - 55 people, wounded - 157 people, missing - 7 people.

36 brigade - killed and wounded - 305 people.

1493 glanders - killed - 10 people, wounded - 84 people, missing - 3 people.

Losses among motorized riflemen were mainly from artillery and mortar fire of the enemy.

During the same time, the damage inflicted on the enemy:

Destroyed: tanks - 59, armored vehicles - 7, self-propelled guns - 18, machine. machine guns - 5, manual. machine guns - 19, anti-tank guns - 19, different guns. caliber - 28, aircraft - 2 and many other weapons.

Destroyed up to 1990 soldiers and officers.

On July 28, stubborn battles went on all day, during which the 12th motorized rifle brigade managed to come close to the northwestern outskirts of Vetrovo.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3412, op. 1, d. 66, l.6-7.

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FROM THE DOCUMENTS OF THE FEDERAL MILITARY ARCHIVE
OF GERMANY:

“Perfect, secret 20th Panzer
Division No. 814/43. 28.07.43,
16.30 KNP division - lowland south
of Gradunovka On the martial law of the division

Order No. 7

1. In yesterday's and today's offensives, the enemy suffered tangible human and material losses. Only in the sector of the division from July 26 to July 28, 1943, 139 enemy tanks were destroyed.

2. On the night of July 28 to July 29, the front line of defense is to be redeployed to the defense sector Nugr - Bolshaya Chern - 1 km north of Kuzminki - Karateevo - height 232.6 (1 km southwest of Khomyakovo).

3. The 20th Panzer Division remains in place on the front line of defense to protect the Bolshaya Chern (claim) - Tsymbulovo - Tskan - Lokna sector.

The 92nd tank-sapper battalion (without the 1st company), as well as parts of the 92nd anti-tank artillery regiment from noon on 28.07. for acting on the arrangement of the front line of defense.

4. About conducting a retreat.

At 20.30, redeploy the 101st, 59th motorized regiment and the 20th tank reconnaissance battalion and take up the following positions: the height south of Suryanino and the height north of Rudnevo.

The anti-tank units of both regiments are temporarily subordinate to the 92nd anti-tank artillery regiment.

The task for the units that have taken up positions is to repel a sudden enemy attack from the northern direction and to the rear, as well as to provide cover for a further retreat to the Tskan defense sector.

The 112th Motorized Regiment, which controls the remnants of the 59th Motorized Regiment, as well as the 2nd Company of the 21st Tank Battalion, which occupied a stronghold - high. 233.0, withdraw from the front line of defense at 22.00.

0.00. The troops covering the retreat should leave their positions and withdraw to the ordered area.

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Retreat route: Rudnevo - Dolbilovo - Bolshaya Chern (east).

The combat group "Brown" is introduced to the front line of defense: the 112th motorized regiment, the 2nd battalion of the 92nd anti-tank artillery regiment, the 1st company of the 92nd tank-sapper battalion.

The right border of the 25th motorized division: Krasny Sadok - Bolshaya Chern (east) - Krivusha (east) - Suryanino (east).

The left border of the 10th motorized division: the bridge near Lokna - the road to Tsybulovo - Tskan (east) - Dolbilovo (east) - Vetrovo (east).

6. The division provides defense of the following areas:

a) the 59th motorized regiment - a lowland south of Lokna;

6) the 21st tank battalion - the area around the Dubrovsky settlement;

c) the 92nd anti-tank artillery regiment (except for the 2nd company) - the eastern part of the lowland west of Chernoye;

D) the 20th tank reconnaissance battalion - the area around Stud Farm No. 15;

e) 92nd tank-sapper battalion - the area around and west of Krasny Sadok. During the return redeployment, use all engineer-sapper platoons, which are subordinate to the 59th motorized regiment, in order to destroy all remaining weapons, especially tanks.

After forcing parts of the division of the river. Nugr in the area of Bolshaya Chern, as well as forcing the river. Tskan of the 92nd tank-sapper battalion must immediately prepare the bridge over the Studeny for the explosion and, by order of the commander of the 112th motorized regiment, blow it up.

In the area of the ford across the Nugr (Bolshaya Chern and Lokna) to build a pontoon bridge with a carrying capacity of 24 tons.

7. All units subordinate to the 18th Panzer Division (101st Motorized Regiment and 110th Artillery Battalion) leave the positions defended by the 20th Panzer Division and return to the disposal of the 18th Panzer Division. New positions will be announced later.

8. The 92nd anti-tank artillery regiment withdraws individual batteries from firing positions from 1600 hours and places them behind the new line of defense.

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Composition, armament and losses of the 20th TD (document from the military archive of Germany)

From 20.30 to 22.00 continue shelling of enemy positions.

9. Anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery regiments of the 18th and 20th tank divisions are in positions in the Lokna area - south of Bolshaya Chern and act in accordance with the orders of the operational command of the division.

10. The 92nd anti-tank artillery regiment provides radio communications. For this, first of all, it is necessary to equip a communication point in Lokna, where messages from the headquarters of the 112th motorized regiment about new positions will be received.

I. The 20th tank reconnaissance battalion conducted TI reconnaissance of the area south of Stud Farm No. 15.

Lo 19.00 to remain in the same positions; from 19.00 to 2.00, reconnaissance units to relocate to the area east of Lokna.

Distributor: 1st
quartermaster officer of the 101st motorized regiment (18th TD) Signature "I".

1 VA-MA VN 24-35/109.

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6th Guards Mechanized Corps

During the day, the formations of the corps of General Akimov were subjected to fierce enemy counterattacks.

At dawn, units of the 16th motorized rifle brigade counterattacked from the southern bank of the river. Ors in a northeasterly direction.

At noon, two enemy battalions counterattacked units of the 17th brigade from the direction of Suryanino. At 12 hours 50 minutes 10 enemy tanks were hit, separate from Schli.

"At 13.10, the 17th MBR was counterattacked by 15 Tiger tanks from the Vetrovsky direction. All enemy counterattacks were repulsed.

5.00 28.07 49 MBR knocked out the opponents with a flank

ka from Yasnaya Polyana, Voinovsky. At 12.00 attack on the heights of the south. Yasnaya Polyana was disrupted by heavy enemy machine gun, mortar and artillery fire from the Shemyakino and Dulebinsky districts.

At 0900, the 16th MBR launched an attack on the Dulebinsky stronghold, but the offensive was thwarted by heavy fire and a counterattack. At 19.00, after artillery preparation, the brig attacked Dulebinsky ik again at 22.00, captured it and advanced to the Shemyakino line.

On the night of July 29, the enemy began to retreat in a southerly direction.

Working with archival documents in Podolsk, my daughter Ekaterina drew attention to the combat log of the 49th mechanized brigade, which was kept by a staff officer unknown to us, and wrote on the margins of her notebook: "Super Yes, such wonderful pages written by one can safely say that an accomplished writer is rare. Who is he, this literary aesthete of war, how did his further fate turn out? Where did he end the war and did he live to see the Victory? I would like to answer these questions. To find and seek out an undoubtedly talented Russian person is our immediate goal. And while we read:

"28.07. Task: to break the resistance of the avenue in the Yas district

1 TsAMO RF, f. 3434, op. 1, d.2, l.8.

220

naya Polyana, Voinovsky, take possession of Shemyakino and by the end of the day reach the Rudnevo-Bolkhov highway.

The sun, like a red-hot core of metal, rose from the horizon and with its rays illuminated the ravines and hollows in which, entrenched, our Soviet, Russian soldiers sat, with all the passion of their hearts hating the enemy, who was sitting on Russian soil 150 meters from them. .

At 12:00 a smoke screen was launched. Soldiers of the chemical platoon Ivanov, Pshenichny, Alekseev and others worked exceptionally quickly. Despite the aimed machine-gun fire of the pr-ka, they quickly crossed the hollow with a large load of smoke, without losing a single person.

Our tanks were cleared from the Yasnaya Polyana prospect. The enemy began to retreat to the village of Shemyakino. Due to the lack of a crossing, the tanks could not cross the river. Ors

The bridge could not be built that day.

The brigade did not complete the task of the day.

Our losses in two days of fighting (27, 28.07) in personnel:

killed - 107, wounded - 522 people; Armed with: tank Kit-34 - 5, 45-mm cannon - 1, heavy machine guns - Zsht. "I.

The 56th Separate Tank Regiment, which was part of the 6th Guards Mech Corps, played an important role in the liquidation of the Orlovsky bridgehead. After breaking through the enemy defenses north of Orel, our troops, developing the success of the offensive, moved forward with battles. The Germans, maneuvering their troops and throwing in fresh infantry and tank forces, fiercely resisted and tried at all costs to delay our advancing units.

"In certain sectors of the front," it was written in the form of the 118th Guards Tank Regiment (56th detachment), "he managed to slow down the pace of our offensive, and at that moment some kind of force was needed that could strike at the pr-ku and create favorable conditions for the development of a further offensive.

On the front in the Lunevo-Borovoe region, our regiment appeared as such a force, which successfully broke through the German defenses.

1 TsAMORF, f. 3346, op. 1, d. 3, l. 10-11.

221

tsev and ensured the further successful offensive of our troops

On July 28, by order of the regiment commander, the regiment left the battle, concentrated in the village. Ivanovsky.

The regiment coped well with the task, for which the regiment commander, Lieutenant Colonel Selivanchik, was awarded the Order of the Patriotic War of the 2nd degree, and the chief of staff, Major Kurtsev, was awarded the Order of the Red Star. For courage and courage shown in battles from 26 to 28.07. 55 more people were awarded the order and medals of the USSR!

FROM THE JOURNAL OF COMBAT
ACTIONS OF THE 10TH MOTORIZED DIVISION:

"Wednesday 07/28/43

Purpose: defense of
the command post of the division - Bolshaya Chern

11.45. Message from the liaison officer sent to the corps: "The division operates in the same place until night. Details are oral.

On the night of July 29, the division retreated and took up defensive positions along the southern bank of the Tskan River in the Karateevo (south) - Tskan - Bolshaya Chern (north) section.

The commanders were given instructions on how to conduct combat in the event that their units were separated by the enemy.

13.15. The division commander leaves for the location of the regiments, where the reconnaissance of the area takes place. Preparations are underway to move the command post of the division.

15.15. Attack of dive bombers on the initial positions of the enemy and his heavy batteries in the Stolbchee area.

19.00. Report per day to the Army Corps.

On the right flank of the 41st Motorized Regiment, several infantry attacks supported by tanks were repulsed.

After lunch, our own attacks by dive bombers against the enemy's concentration on battery positions in the Stolbchee area.

b TsAMORF, f. PV8tv.tp ,op. 240734 s, d. 1, l 10.

222

Enemy assault aircraft bombed and fired at the columns moving along the roads and the division's location from airborne weapons.

19.50. The division's new command post is Chernoye (North).

20.30. Corps order: withdraw the 3rd Artillery Division of the 10th Artillery Regiment from their positions and at dawn send them under the control of the motorized division "Grossdeutschland".

30th Ural Volunteer Tank Corps

As a result of the fighting on July 27 and on the night of July 28, the tankers of the Urals, having come into close contact with the enemy, cross the river. Ors couldn't.

On the morning of July 28 (by 10.00), the formations of the corps "occupied the following position:

a) 30th Motorized Rifle Brigade from 299 minp entrenched on the northern bank of the river. Ors at the Yasnaya Polyana - Bessonovsky - Shchigry section in readiness for the offensive;

6) 197th brigade in the initial area - Luchki readiness for action with the exit of 30th motorized brigade to the southern coast. Ors;

c) 243 brigade put units and subunits on combat readiness;

d) 244 brigade in the initial area of the southern forest. Ivanovsky">?.

The commander of the Ural Tank Corps, General Rodin, decided in the first half of the day, after artillery processing of the front edge, with the forces of the 30th motorized rifle brigade with the 299th mortar regiment, to advance from the Bessonovsky-Dulebina line and reach the southern bank of the river. Ors, capture the Dulebinsky and Strukovo settlements. In the future, the soldiers of these units were supposed to establish crossings on the river. Ors and cover the crossing of tank brigades and their development of success in the direction of Odnoshchekino, Sukhochevo, Voskresensky in order to capture the bunk crossings on the move. Nugr.

At 11 o'clock, after artillery and aviation processing of the forward edge, the above units were under cover

1! VA-MA VN 26-23/124. 2

TsAMORF, f. 30 UDTK, op. 1, d. 34, l. 5 (06.).

223

With the fire of one battery of the 1621st sap and motorized riflemen of the 197th brigade went on the offensive.

At 14.00, the 3rd battalion, a platoon of anti-tank rifles and a platoon of submachine gunners of the 30th motorized brigade crossed the river. Ors and went to the northwestern outskirts of Dulebina.

The rest of the units and divisions were not successful.

The enemy concentrated heavy mortar and rifle-machine-gun fire on the crossing units, and by 1700 hours they were forced to retreat to the northern bank of the river. Ors.

At 19.00, after a half-hour artillery raid, the corps commander brought the 197th tank brigade into battle, which turned from its initial positions in Luchansky for battle.

Tanks, approaching the northern bank of the river. Ors, opened strong artillery and machine-gun fire on the front line of the enemy defenses.

Under the cover of the tanks of the 197th brigade, the motorized rifle battalion of captain Firsov attacked decisively against the nickname and, having reached the southern bank of the river. Ors, by 21.00 captured the Bessonovsky settlement. At the same time, the battalion suffered heavy losses and had no further success.

The corps commander decided to develop the emerging success in the direction of Odnoshchekino, Sukhochevo, Voskresensky.

"The decision of the corps commander at 22.00:

1. During the night of 07/29/43, find fords and equip bunk crossings. Ors at the Bessonovsky - Dulebino section.

2. 30 MSBR to force the river. Ors and provide a foothold for the advance of tank brigades.

3. At dawn on July 29, 1943, the tank brigades would reach the Kazansky and Luchansky area, begin pursuing the retreating enemy in the direction of Odnoshekino, Sukhochevo, Voskresensky, and seize the crossings on the river. Nigr on the go.

During the night of 07/29/43, the engineer battalion made three crossings across the river. Ors. The 30th Motorized Rifle Brigade, having broken the resistance of the enemy, captured Dulebino and Strukovo and thereby ensured the crossing of the tank brigades without them accepting the battle.

Overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy, Sverd

1 TsAMORF, f. 30 UDTK, op. 1, d. 34, i. 6.6 (0b).

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The Iovskaya brigade, in cooperation with the Perm tank and 30th motorized rifle brigades, captured the Kolontaevo, Sukhochevo, Odnoshchekino area by 8.00 on July 29 and reached the Nugrna River in the Voznesensky-Kuliki section.

From the memoirs of the Hero of the Soviet Union Vasily Zaitsev:

"The deputy chief of staff of the brigade for political affairs, Captain Ivanov, persistently asked the brigade command to appoint him instead of the deceased Rakhmatulin as commander of the 1st tank battalion. And his request was granted. As a former tank company commander, he had combat experience, knew the battalion personnel well, and the battalion tankers also knew and respected the new commander. Walking around the unit after taking up a new position, Ivanov went to the repairmen and drew attention to a tank with a torn gun barrel. A thin, white-haired German was sitting near the tank. Seeing the captain, he jumped up and, in broken Russian, began to tearfully beg to be left alive. When asked by Ivanov what caused such panic fear, the German said that the commanders of his unit told the soldiers that they were confronted by a "wild division of black knives", supposedly formed from communist thugs who ruthlessly cut off the heads of captured German soldiers with these knives. So he is afraid that he, who was captured in intelligence, will face such a fate. Laughing, the battalion commander said: "What kind of false propaganda are the Nazis filling your heads with? They even managed to slanderously speculate on a gift from the Zlatoust metallurgists, who made beautiful knives for household needs for volunteers. Behind these absurd fables is hidden the desire of the fascists to attribute to us, without any reason, the barbarism and inhumanity inherent in them, for which they will answer to the peoples.

- On July 29, our brigade was given the task of forcing

to take the Nug River in cooperation with the 30th motorized rifle and 243rd tank brigades, capture the village of Borilovo and then advance in the direction of the settlement of Vishnevsky. The village of Borilovo was located on a high bank and state

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hovered over the surrounding area, and from the bell tower of the church it was visible for several kilometers in a circle. All this made it easier for the enemy to conduct defense and hampered the actions of the advancing units of the brigade.

In the direction of Borilovo - Churilovo, a T-34 tank and six machine gunners under the command of Lieutenant Bortsov were sent for reconnaissance. The battalion commander, captain Ivanov, walked around the tank crews that were ready for battle. Upon learning that the crew of the tank company of Lieutenant Bezdushny had one of his surnames - the tower shooter Ivanov Ivan Porfiryevich, the captain said to him: "Well, namesake, do not disgrace the name of Ivanov new, on whom, as the people say, the Russian land rests. See you in Berlin."

At 20:00 on July 29, after a 30-minute artillery preparation and a volley of guards mortars, the brigade, in cooperation with the Perm tank and 30th motorized rifle brigade, began to force the Nugr River. Under the cover of tank fire, the company of Senior Lieutenant A.P. Nikolaev, capturing the southern outskirts of the village of Borilovo. The fighters probed the bottom of the river and marked a ford, along which three tanks passed, holding submachine gunners in battle. Skillfully led the battle, being in battle formations, the battalion commander Captain Firsov. By the morning of July 30, the battalion, with the support of tanks, despite the stubborn resistance of the enemy, captured the village of Borilovo. All units of the brigade concentrated in Borilovo. When crossing the river, the commander of the first motorized rifle company, old sergeant Lutsenko, who took command after the death of the company commander, Lieutenant Bessonov, and the commander of the company of anti-tank rifles, lieutenant Verkhovets, especially distinguished themselves.

Soon Lieutenant Bortsov's tank returned from reconnaissance. On the armor lay the body of the deceased commander. Here is what the driver-mechanic Severenchuk told about the task: "After Borilovo, I drove the tank at maximum speed so that the enemy could not conduct aimed fire at the vehicle and the landing force located on the armor. Two villages slipped through, observing the German battle positions, and

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stopped in the field ... Lieutenant Bortsov gave the command to return to his own along the same road. On the way back, the tank was heavily fired from all types of weapons. I rammed some buildings, barricades built on our way from

barrels, without thinking that they can be mined. When I saw the destroyed bridge across the Nugr River, I stopped the tank, waiting for the command of the lieutenant, but it did not follow. I turned and saw him lying in blood on the ammo rack of the tank. I decide to return to Borilovo... The battalion commander's tank stood by the church.

I reported to Captain Ivanov about everything. He thanked for the reconnaissance and ordered to bury Lieutenant Bortsov, and ordered the chief of staff of the battalion, senior lieutenant Korolkov, to present Lieutenant Bortsov and the entire crew to government awards for excellent reconnaissance!

Results of the third day of the battle

Summing up the results of the third day of the offensive of the Badanov group, which on this day was almost in full force involved in hostilities, it should be noted that this day was a turning point, but not a key one in the battle of Borilov.

On that day, tank and motorized rifle units overcame with great difficulty the seemingly impregnable first line of defense of the enemy - a river with the short name Ors. All day in the river valley there were battles for crossings, especially in its lower reaches, in order to be on the south bank. Particularly fierce battles unfolded for key command heights, as well as for large - key - settlements, providing a reliable and solid defense of the enemy. These are Shchigry, Dulebino, Suryanino, Vetrovo, Rudnevo and other villages, villages, settlements, farms, which are densely located, literally at every kilometer, between the Orsa and Nugrya rivers.

Ra tells about the opposition to our offensive

1 Zaitsev V.I. G 'vardeyskaya tank. - Sverdlovsk: Middle Ural book publishing house, 1989. Pp. 17-18.

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port of the commander of the 59th motorized regiment of the 20th tank division of the Wehrmacht:

"These were the heaviest battles that the 59th Motorized Regiment had endured since 1941. From 10 to 30 enemy tanks and numerous infantry opposed our regiment. All Russian attacks were repelled, although there were isolated tank breakthroughs. Nevertheless, the tank battalions fought on July 26-28 near Vetrovo and at an altitude of 233.0.

Two battalions of the 59th regiment were destroyed, and one battalion repulsed attacks several times, but held its positions, despite the loss of all anti-tank

funds. He remained in position even when enemy tanks passed through them. It was necessary to gather all the forces and means to eliminate the breakthrough of Russian tanks.

By the beginning of the retreat, there were almost no forces, they retreated already at night, and the next morning counterattacks began again. It was a non-stop fight. Contrary to the usual schedule, the Russians, in order to prevent the withdrawal, tried to break through the defenses every day from 18:00 to 20:00.

The number of knocked out tanks in close combat reached 10. The regiment never left its lines without an order, but counterattacked. In these battles, the regiment lost all its combat strength.

The reasons for the losses of the regiment are not in the poor leadership of the commanders, the brave knights of the Iron Crosses, but in the numerical superiority of the Russians.

LOSSES OF THE 59TH MOTORIZED REGIMENT OF THE 20TH TANK DIVISION FROM JULY 5 TO 13, 1943

| Categories about non-commissioned officers | Privates Total

| Killed | | 17 Wa: 99
her.

: Prop. missing | : — 6 7

r y r

Unvoiced loss 6 5 _ | | 83 | 106

| Wounded p | 39 | 46 | [Total
2. 109 2 | 52 |

LOSSES OF THE 59TH MOTORIZED REGIMENT 20th TANK DIVISION FROM JULY 5 TO AUGUST 10, 1943

Categories Ophiites | Non-commissioned officers | Sluggish | Total Killed
7 | 34 | 144 185 Prop. missing
E 15 | 121 | 140

| Unvoiced loss and | 49 265 — |

Wounded 45] 172 No. 715 | 932

[Total 56,221 | 90 | 1257 | Signature".

The data of the above tables confirm that in the defensive battles on the Nogr River (from July 26 to August 10) the losses of the German regiment are three times greater than in the offensive battle on the northern face of the Kursk Bulge (at Soborov-

skom field from 5 to 13 July).

zhzh

By the end of the third day of continuous fighting, our tankers crossed the Bolkhov-Khotynets highway 10 km west of Bolkhov and reached the banks of the Nugr River, but they could not force it on the move. The enemy pulled his forces to the southern bank of the river in time and managed to gain a foothold on its steep banks - starting from the northern outskirts of Borilovo to the regional center of Znamenskoye.

At the same time, the Germans continued to hold back the offensive of the left wing of the 11th Guards and 4th Tank Armies, retaining the Bolkhov-Khotynets road (in the Znamensky district), because on that day the rears stretched to the west in an endless ribbon, and then the combat units, which for the time being repulsed the onslaught of the Soviet troops.

Why did it happen again? Why didn't our tankers break through to the south, cut through the enemy group of Garpe and didn't enter the enemy's deep rear in order to cut the enemy's main communications in the sector from Na-

' VA-MA VN 37-175/45. R. 165-167.

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Ryshkino to Khotynets? The main reason lies in the fact that our command did not take into account the strength and capabilities of this group, which was not much inferior to ours in numbers and weapons, but had enormous advantages: in organizing the conduct of military operations of a defensive nature, in the experience of conducting them, and what can I say - in armament and, most importantly, in mobility. The German group was reliably covered from the air, which cannot be said about our formations, which remained unprotected from attacks from the air. All this ultimately became the cause of huge losses (both in personnel and in weapons) that were carried by our troops, storming the first line of defense.

Here is what is recorded in the combat log of the 30th UDTK. 28.07 at 22.00:

"During the night on 07/29/43, the engineer battalion made three crossings across the river. Ors.

The 30th Motorized Rifle Brigade, having broken the resistance of the enemy, captured Dulebino and Strukovo and thereby ensured the crossing of the tank brigades without them accepting the battle.

As a result of the battles for mastering the crossings on the river. Ors and the settlements of Bessonovsky, Dulebinsky, Strukovo, Dulebino, the brigades suffered losses:

1. 30 MSBR. Personnel: killed - 32 people, wounded - 156 people; hit: wheeled vehicles - 3, machine guns - 1, mortars - 2.

2. 197 brig. Personnel: killed - 61 people; wounded - 10 people; cars were hit - 9, tanks burned down - 4, tanks were hit - 7.

Negative moments that affected the performance of combat missions:

1. The personnel had no combat experience, with the exception of part of the command staff. The commanders of platoons and tanks of tank brigades, the overwhelming majority of whom graduated from a one-year school in March 1943, had not previously served in the army.

2. Weakly organized reconnaissance of the enemy and interaction with reinforcement units.

3. The terrain, crossed by ravines and shallow rivers, limited the maneuverability for tanks.

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4. As a result of frequent rainfalls, the road made it difficult for wheeled vehicles to move.

5. Quick entry into battle of formations and parts of the body without sufficient training.

6. There was no moment of surprise.

Positive aspects that contribute to the implementation of combat missions:

1. The personnel went into battle boldly and acted decisively seriously.

2. The absence of interruptions in the supply of ammunition and fuel.

3. The great desire of the commanding staff to win.

FROM THE BATTLE REPORT OF THE WESTERN FRONT
HEADQUARTERS TO THE CHIEF OF THE
GENERAL STAFF ABOUT THE OFFENSIVE:

"July 28, 1943 02:10 No. 255
"<...>

3.11th Guards. army in cooperation with the 2nd Guards. kk, 4 TA continued the offensive. The enemy puts up stubborn resistance. The advancing enemy units counterattack with infantry and tanks. Its aircraft in groups of 30 to 60 aircraft bombed the advancing units during the day.

At 20.00 the army fought:

8 Guards sk for this day had no promotion. Counterattacks were repulsed from the Suryanino area on Vetrovo: at 12.00 an infantry regiment and at 15.00 two battalions with 30 tanks. As a result of a fierce battle in this area, up to an infantry battalion was destroyed and 10 enemy tanks were burned. In the area of Rudnevo, Suryanino, observation established up to 70 enemy tanks.

<...>

5.4 TA, in cooperation with the infantry, continued the offensive. At 11.00 at the front of the 36th Guards. sk in the direction of Znamenskoye was put into battle by 25 shopping malls and on the left flank by 8 guards. sc introduced 30 tk. Due to the highly organized anti-tank system of the enemy, the sick amount of artillery, the army troops per day

1 TsAMORF, f. 30 UDTK, op. 1, d. 34, l.6 (06b.), 7.

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had no progress. In a number of areas, fierce battles were fought with counterattacking enemy tanks and infantry.

<...>

7. Last night and day, the 1st Air Army destroyed enemy manpower and equipment on the left wing of the front. According to incomplete data, 331 sorties were made. As a result of aviation actions, up to 28 tanks, up to 190 vehicles, up to 18 guns were destroyed, 4 warehouses with ammunition were destroyed, and an enemy aircraft FV-190 was shot down.

Aerial reconnaissance established: in the areas of Rudnevo, Kolontaevo, Znamenskoye, Dubrovsky, Borilovo - up to 200 tanks, up to 550 vehicles; and at the airfields - Karachev - 14 aircraft, Shatalovo - 70, Borovsky - 50.

Enemy aviation in groups of up to 40 aircraft bombed our troops on the left wing of the front in the areas of Pasika, Bol. On Ryshkino, Alyokhino, Alisovo, Bol. Semenovka (all points 10-15 km southeast of Karachev). Fighters covered their attack aircraft. On the left flank of the 11th Guards. army countered the work of our attack aircraft. At the same time, they conducted reconnaissance on the entire front. Until 18.00, up to 300 sorties were taken into account.

8. The military council of the front - in the 11th Guards. army.

Petrov ".

SECOND STAGE OF THE BATTLE

Combat operations of troops to break through the second line of defense

enemy in the area Borilovo - Bolshaya Chern - Znamen

skoe.

Assault on the enemy's second line of defense on the Nugr River (July 29 - August 4)

Day four

July 29, Thursday. Weather: cloudy, rainy, cool, windy. All roads are washed out. On this day Badanov's tank group proceeded to

' TsAMORF, f.. 208, op. 2511, d. 2424, l. 453-455.

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assault on the second line of defense along the Nugr River with cut-off positions on the Tskan River.

As a result of powerful blows by our troops in the area west of Bolkhov, there was a threat of a breakthrough by Badanov's tank group to the enemy's main communications Orel-Bryansk.

Even earlier, on the evening of July 26, Model personally, without Hitler's permission, gave the order to evacuate his troops from Bolkhov. This happened by the end of the seventh day of the assault on the city, located on seven hills surrounded by the bend of the Nugr River.

But before considering the events of that day, it is necessary to return to the first day of the offensive - July 26th. On this day, an important meeting was held at Hitler's Headquarters with the commanders of the Wehrmacht army groups. Only one question was decided: to leave the Orlovsky strategic foothold or to keep it. An argument broke out between Hitler and the commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal Günther von Kluge. Kluge insisted (and he was supported by the chief of staff of the Wehrmacht ground forces, Colonel-General Kurt Zeitzler) to leave the Oryol ledge and leave in a timely manner for the Hagen line of defense prepared in advance. Feldmar Shall and Colonel-General at the map with the position of German troops in the East proved the need for withdrawal of troops.

From the transcript of the meeting at Hitler's Headquarters on July 26, 1943:

"Führer. I need to clarify once again the general situation. We are talking about the fact that we must withdraw from the front in the shortest possible time several formations <...>.

Von Kluge. My Fuehrer! I draw your attention to the fact that at the moment I cannot remove a single connection from the front.

This is completely out of the question at the moment! (At that time, the troops of the Army Group "Center" fought only on the Orlovsky bridgehead, therefore, it was from here that von Kluge could not "remove a single formation from the front." - A. Shch.)

Fuhrer. But it needs to be done...

Von Kluge. We can release a few troops only after taking the position "Hagen"!

! Under the positions of "Hagen" are meant defensive structures east of Bryansk, located on the right bank of the Desna River; the Germans began their construction in the summer of 1943.

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Tseytiler. The first step is to withdraw the troops to this line, then you can withdraw "Greater Germany" and keep it here for the time being. <...>

Von Kluge. Such a development of the general political situation was not expected by us, we could not imagine that everything would turn out this way. Tener, a new decision must be made: first of all, we must leave Orel if we want to preserve our own vital forces.

Fuhrer. This is perfectly clear, of course.

Von Kluge. But then it will be necessary to start the retreat. However, I will not be able to withdraw the entire population from there and take out all the material reserves. This simply cannot be done in such a short time, it will require a huge amount of work. This is a very densely populated area. You can't do this head on.

In addition, the following question arises: the fortifications here, to the south - the so-called "Hagen" position - are only under construction.

Fuhrer. Yes unfortunately.

Von Kluge. It's nothing you can do. We have a lot of construction battalions and all kinds of devilry. It is raining there now, and so torrentially that it cannot be imagined at all. All these construction battalions were compelled to put the roads in order instead of being here in the rear for a long time and building these positions. In addition, they had to be thrown into battle in order to only reflect the blows of the enemy.

Fuhrer. Looks like the rain will stop soon.

Von Kluge. But that is not all! The question also arises of the so-called Karachev positions, my Fuhrer. If I take positions that are not yet equipped and are again attacked by tanks and other means, they will break through with tanks, and if this happens, there will be a crisis. I'm still talking about it

only because now we still have good chances, and also because with a change in the situation we may find ourselves in an extremely difficult situation. I would like to once again put the question before you: would it not be more practical to immediately move beyond the Desna? We must necessarily rely on the Karachev positions, but at least as the backbone of defense.

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The troops will be able to put themselves in order on them for further withdrawal. So, Fuhrer, I pose the question: would it not be more practical, if possible, to immediately withdraw behind Des well? Here they have a secure position, but here it is unreliable, Fuhrer, I will not be able to withdraw prematurely. I must first build the Hagen positions, put them in order. I can't walk away headlong.

Fuhrer. Headlong retreat is out of the question!

Von Kluge. In any case, not as fast as it is envisaged now.

Fuhrer. What time frame did you provide?

Von Kluge. We plan the following dates: about five days ... "!.

You can learn about how the Oryol grouping of the enemy retreated to the Hagen line from the documents of the Federal Military Archive of Germany.

"ONLY FOR COMMAND!

Top secret 14 copies 2nd
copy Command of
the 2nd Panzer
Army Operations Department (1a). No.
1225/43. A.N. Oi., 28.07.43 To the Harpe group, the Gollnik group and all the
corps

Army Order No. 1

Regarding the line "Hagen" (code
name of the operation "Autumn trip")

1. The 2nd Panzer Army is gradually withdrawn to the Hagen 2 defensive
line and takes up positions in accordance with the layout.